

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals, welcome to episode 52.

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.

Can I just say wow? Today, I am recording my 52<sup>nd</sup> episode, which marks the one-year anniversary of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*. I am beyond excited to have shared this last year with each and every one of you. It has been such an honor to develop this podcast and to work with some of you personally.

I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you on a personal level, to hear your stories and to support you in leading your school and your life from a fully empowered state. To celebrate the one-year anniversary of the podcast, I have a very special treat for you today. I have decided to set up my very first podcast interview so that you can hear from someone who has been one of my mentors and she can tell you first-hand about my experience and how coaching has supported me in becoming the person I am today.

Now, this person is not in the field of education, yet she has taught me so much about being a school leader and about myself and how I choose to show up in the world. She actually is the very reason for the existence of this podcast and I am beyond humbled to interview her today.

Her name is Stacey Smith. She and I met at training at The Life Coach School and I ended up hiring Stacey as my business coach. We've worked together now for over two years and she is one of the people I cherish most on this planet.

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

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

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Angela: Welcome, Stacey.

Stacey: Oh, you're so sweet. I'm just over here listening to your intro and I'm like – it feels like just yesterday that we met there.

Angela: I know, right? And we have so come so far...

Stacey: And just yesterday that I locked you in a hotel room to create this podcast.

Angela: Well that was about a year ago. We were in San Francisco. You locked me in the room. I think it took me about eight hours to write one podcast. Can you believe that?

Stacey: Yes, actually I totally can because – you probably know this from coaching with me and us talking about it and I told this story over and over. I feel like my first 20 podcasts took me like seven hours each. It was just like rerecording and rewriting and just all of the things. To create a podcast for your listeners, I think they need to hear this – to create a podcast and offer your work in the world this way is no easy feat. So I think anyone that has one, the mindset that you already know they're in, it's like above and beyond because of what it takes. So I'm so proud that you are 52 episodes in and it's so awesome that this is your year episode because I know what it takes to create this and to get here and it's such a huge milestone. So congratulations.

Angela: Oh thank you, and thank you so much for being there for me and holding space for me while I was in my first few episodes, because it was painful, I'm not going to lie. It sounds like a podcast would be very easy; like you sit down, you push record, you say what you have to say and then you push it out in the world. It's not that simple.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Stacey: It's not.

Angela: There's so much more energy that goes behind it, so thank you for your support and your encouragement.

Stacey: You're so welcome.

Angela: It's been amazing. So let's start by having you tell my audience a little bit about what you do and how you think it applies to everyone no matter what type of business or career they are in.

Stacey: Yeah, that's a great question. So I help life coaches make money. That is the simplest way to explain what I do. I help life coaches make money. I was a sales expert for seven years. I used to sell like knives, lint rollers, ShamWows, all across the country infomercial style in Walmarts, in department stores, on military bases. So I am the queen of sales, and that is my forte, my background. But when I added mindset with it, I realized how powerful and impactful it was to really be thinking through what you're doing and why you're doing it when you're selling. So what I do with my clients in helping them make money, which I do think is 100% transferable to what anybody is doing, any type of leadership or entrepreneur type role, is I teach people how to sell, which is just inspiring people into action. And I teach people how to build relationships, which is – it's literally like an assembly line. Selling is inspiring people into action, and inspiring people into action comes from building relationships.

Angela: That's so, so true. You know, this is something that I also work on with my clients because, as you can imagine, building relationships as a school leader is so crucial. And it's really important for especially my new school leaders, to understand the benefits. And not just the short-term benefits, but really the long-term benefits of being able to lead and to inspire other people into action starts with you. It starts with building that relationship with yourself and with those that you lead, because you want to

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

have influence and impact and leave legacy as a school leader, and that all stems from self-care, self-empowerment, and building relationships with those you work with.

Stacey: Yeah, and I love that you said building relationships with yourself. I actually just sent an email out to my list talking about how the number one thing that keeps coaches out of building their business is this feeling of inadequacy, which some people call the fraud complex. But it's this feeling of not good enough, I can't do it, who do I think I am? Maybe I'm not meant to do this. and I imagine that your principals and your leaders, or even your teachers that listen to this, probably experience that as well on a daily basis in their leadership, of I'm totally inadequate as a leader, I'm not good enough, I can't do it, maybe this isn't meant for me. And so that first step to building relationships with other people, to inspire people into action, in order to, quote en quote, sell them. Because every conversation you have is a sales conversation. Someone is the strongest energy. Someone is getting what they want. And so that very first step is building that relationship with yourself. And I think so much of that is being willing to really love yourself, care for yourself, like the self-care, when you are experiencing that inadequacy and that not enough and that not doing it right emotion.

Angela: Yes, and you know, the majority of my clients are actually aspiring school leaders, they want to become one, or they've just become one and they are asking, what did I get myself into? This is not like teaching at all. They don't see the connection. They don't see it and they are really sinking. I feel for them because I know I've been there before. I know what that feels like and because I didn't have that security and that certainty within myself, I was then not able to lead. And so until I really tuned into who am I, how am I going to lead, what is it that I am good at doing and how can I use that energy to influence my staff in a positive way – until I really got clear and grounded with that, I wasn't really able to lead. And I see this happening with my new principals as well.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Stacey: Yeah, I think that that is so important. What you just touched on is I think you have to get clear on your definition of what leadership is and how it's obtained. Because I think it could be so easy, and I do think that the human mind, the way that we think of leadership, is kind of like authority and getting people to do things, telling people what to do. And I think it's like the opposite. True leadership, I think, you have to look at the result you get from the way that you go about leading and ask yourself if you're getting the result that you want, if it's effective, if it's working. And anytime that you're not having a really strong relationship with yourself, before you go out to try to inspire other people and lead other people and sell them on whatever you're wanting to accomplish, if you haven't done that work, you might have authority but not respect, and then you still might not be getting the result that you want.

Angela: This is so interesting you say that because I think that many leaders might feel like it's too risky or too vulnerable to build those close relationships with the people that they're leading. They want that authority. They feel like they have to have control or they have to have this power over people and I love how you just spoke to that. could you say a little bit more about how they can shift from feeling the need to be on top of or in charge versus having really authentic open transparent relationships with people so that people will be eager to follow and to want to support the vision of the school leader?

Stacey: Yeah, so I think first they have to decide, because this work isn't for everyone. This work is for people who want the end result to be, you know, they're getting what they need to get done within the school system. Whatever their jobs are, that they have to make sure happen, they're having that happen, they're getting results but then also they're getting it in a way that feels good, not only for themselves but for other people, because I think that's the first thing. They have to decide that that's what they want, because there are some people that will say, the end justifies the means and they don't really care about the means. And they might think they're getting what they want and not really checking in with

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

themselves on how it feels. So I think the first thing is they just have to, like, decide that they want to get results, they want to get whatever it is they're trying to accomplish and they want it to feel good for them and other people. That's the buy-in. They have to have that first decision that that's the way that they want it to be. And then they can start looking at what does that look like.

And you and I both know, and I'm sure you probably have even experiences that you could give me a very specific example of when this might happen in application to education. But then you have to decide and see what the means is, how you get there. And I believe firmly that the means, the how you get there, to leadership that really impacts and gets the result and feels great for everybody, is leadership that comes from relationships that have been built upon vulnerability. I think vulnerability creates trust. And I think that people think that it will break – vulnerability is basically exposure to physical or emotional harm. And I think the human brain thinks anytime we're weak or wrong or we don't know what we're doing, we're exposed and something bad will happen and people won't respect us or love us. And it's actually the opposite. And I find this with my coaches sometimes, and I imagine it will be the same with leaders, that they get this feeling that if they're not perfect and they're not on top of it and they don't show themselves as having it all together, then people won't be able to respect them. And then what happens is the people underneath them feel like there's no way they can measure up because they're not perfect and they think they can't do what their leader is doing because their leader's just so great at all of it.

And they can't see themselves in the shoes of the person leading them. And if they can't see themselves in the shoes of the person leading them, they also can't see themselves doing what that leader is asking or modeling for them. It feels like, you're the special unicorn and you can do that, but that's not my life and I can't do that. So vulnerability, to me, is like really exposing yourself and just being all in for who you are and letting people see that so that they can be all in for who they are and they can show up

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

and be honest and communicate, and then a real true conversation is happening from a place of, like, we're all humans. So I think that's one part of it. I hope this isn't too long-winded.

Angela: No, this is great, this is fantastic. I'm actually really connecting with this, and I'll share a personal example. I can still feel the raw feelings that happened, but in this case, it was my second year at my second school. So I'm four years into the principalship. So I'm not brand new. I've been doing this for a few years. And the beginning of that year, I had a massive confrontation with a parent. It escalated up to the superintendent. And the superintendent at that time was extremely supportive for me, but helped me see how I could have handled something differently and had I done this versus that it might have ended differently. And I was able to reconcile the relationship with the parent, but it took a lot of time and patience and energy and pain, basically, for me to see how I could have navigated differently. But the point of this story is that instead of hiding that fact from my staff, I went into the staff meeting – it just happened to be the very next day – and I told the whole story.

I just told it in general terms but I explained to them – basically the gist of my story was had I just taken a few moments to handle something in that moment, it might not have escalated into having to deal with something for a much longer period of time, because many teachers feel like, "I don't want to call that parent back because I'm so busy, I don't have the time, I'll do it tomorrow, I'll send an email tomorrow..." and it just never happens. And then something that could have been handled at a very small level gets escalated into something that turns into a big deal and takes up way much more of your time. And my transparency through that situation brought so much more respect than I ever – that wasn't even my anticipation or my intention, to gain respect. But I had a teacher who was actually pretty hesitant of me. We hadn't really bonded yet. And she said that moment when I stood up in front of the staff and told that story in full transparency and openness, she said she just gained such a level of respect for me that she hadn't seen before in me. And she really felt she



## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

could trust me because I took that risk to be vulnerable in front of my staff and let them know I'm human, I fail. And that really was a powerful moment for me, to get that feedback from that teacher.

Stacey: Yeah, because I think it's so powerful to see the reason that person was able to develop trust with you and feel that is because they saw your humanness and they could see their humanness in your humanness. And when you're not offering your humanness and you're like, "Hey, there are times when we're wrong..." every single person on this planet is wrong probably 1000 times a week. And if you can't come with that energy, then it teaches other people that either you are perfect and there's something wrong with them, or that you're not being honest and you're not being open and that you're hiding something. I used to say this in sales. This is a really great example. The way that I would do my shows is we would make an announcement that we were handing out free gifts and doing a demo, and people would come over to the counter and we would greet them. there would be 20 to 100 people waiting by the time I finished the announcement. And I'd get up and I'd greet them. And if I didn't greet them in my honest and truthful energy, like if I was sick for example and I wasn't feeling well, maybe I had a cold. If I tried to act like I wasn't sick and I was super cheery and I was having an amazing day but I was actually sick, they would feel that – I want to say dissonance – that incongruence...

Angela: I see what you're saying.

Stacey: And immediately, they don't know what is causing the incongruence. They don't even know that there is one; their body just feels that incongruent energy coming from me and they don't want any part of it. They're like, I'm out of here. And so I used to teach salespeople this in the field, that you have to go in with whatever energy you're in. You have to go in with your truth, even if it's like – you don't have to be positive to sell. You don't have to be positive to lead; you have to be honest. And when you're honest with where you are, then people feel that congruent energy. And even if it's like you're 'fessing-up to something that you did that was wrong

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

or you're talking about the way you should have done it differently and showing through example how you should be, even if that is not like your finest moment, people can connect with it because it's honest and it builds trust. So we think that we have to build trust through authority, but really, we need to build trust through vulnerability.

Angela: That's so, so golden and so many leaders feel like they have to have this presence that they know what they're doing all of the time and they are handling it and they're in charge and in control. And when they can release that thought and just lean into, like you said, their humanness, people are so much more willing to support you and back you up and have your back. And as a school leader, your staff is there to serve just as much as you are there to serve them. They're willing to do that when they know you, like you, and trust you.

Stacey: Yeah, and I think the other thing to think about too is that when we say – I think there's a difference between authority and certainty. And I do think that, as leaders, it's important to always have certainty. Like when I'm leading, I have 100 people in one of my programs. I have masterminds that I run, so I have a lot of people coming to me and looking for me to have the answers. And I don't always have the answers. And sometimes, stuff is going on in my business that it's like, I'm having the worst week ever in my business and I'm still showing up to lead my people. So I think there's a difference in we think we need authority – I teach this, that certainty is just knowing that you will be okay in every situation, knowing that in ever uncertain situation, you will bring the certainty by who you are, the way that you think, the way that you problem-solve, and even by your willingness to be in uncertain situations and be okay with that.

Angela: Exactly, oh exactly. I think that brings up another point; so many of my questions that clients come to me with are around relationships and they say that they struggle with difficult staff members or they struggle to lead or they struggle to engage with what they call challenging parents. So I find this so interesting because school is the business of people. I say this

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

all the time. You are constantly engaged with people, but if you don't have that certainty with yourself and trusting yourself to lead, even when you're trying something new for the first time, people can sense that and they will not follow your lead until they're certain that you are certain with yourself, right?

Stacey: Yeah, I think that's so important. And I think to what you just said of the challenging clients, what just occurred to me in this moment is that part of the willingness to be in an uncertain situation and show up certain is you have to be willing to have difficult conversations and to sit in the discomfort of the uncomfortable conversation.

Angela: Yes.

Stacey: That's kind of what a coach does. Like, my job is not to be my client's cheerleader or best friend. My job is to be super honest with them, show them their mind and give them outside perspective and call them on their stuff. So I'm having uncomfortable difficult conversations all of the time, and in order to help my clients, I have to be willing to have that conversation. And I always talk about this almost like this cloud of discomfort that emerges and it's palpable in the room and you can feel it, they can feel it. And you have to be willing to sit in that and keep moving forward because that is where all transformation happens, in the difficult conversation. Whether it's with somebody else, like a parent that isn't happy, or with yourself, realizing that you're wrong and you need to step up and be honest about that and change directions and accept responsibility.

Angela: Man, can I relate to that as a school leader and as a client of yours. We have had those difficult conversations and it is not comfortable, I will attest to that. But I will say, to school leaders out there, let me just share with you; there was a situation. I had a principal's coffee. I held one every month. And our district implemented a new, basically a form letter that went out to any child who had a certain number of tardies. So they were really cracking down on attendance and they were sending out all these

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

attendance letters. So I didn't write the letter. Somebody at district office wrote the letter, but they put my name on it because I was the school leader. They sent these letters out and this parent was beyond livid. So during a principal's coffee, this person is heckling me, harassing me, calling me foul names and I had to stand there – and it was Halloween, so I was dressed up in costume, so talk about feeling like a fool...

Stacey: That is amazing. I literally can picture it. You couldn't be more vulnerable if you tried.

Angela: I might as well have been standing there naked, just bring it on. So I'm standing there and this person's coming at me sideways, and in that difficult moment – so this is, I think, what you're trying to highlight – that moment in and of itself felt very terrible. My heart was racing, my stomach was turning, I could feel myself flushed and sweating a little bit, but I stood there with the certainty of knowing I was going to be okay, that that person, their emotions were theirs. They could yell at me all they wanted. They could embarrass me. They could try to in front of that whole school population. But if I stood there in that moment and didn't sidestep it, didn't try to get out of it, didn't try to appease this person or do anything with it, I let it be what it was, in the end what ended up happening was other parents came up to me saying, "Wow I really appreciated the way you handled that. I'm sorry that happened to you. That's not how everybody feels. That person's just angry." And being able to be in discomfort – and you will be as a leader, my friends. There is no sidestepping having uncomfortable conversations or difficult meetings or having to deal with people you find challenging. That's all just a part of the game. You signed up for the leadership role and that's what it is. So now, your challenge is to allow yourself to experience those moments and live through them and learn from them.

Stacey: Yes, it's so powerful when you don't resist being in that moment. And I think, going back to what we were talking about earlier, I think the reason people try to lead with authority is because they imagine that the –

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

kind of like they don't get vulnerable, they don't build relationships with their people is because it's, in their mind, easier to lead from distance and authority instead of vulnerability and relationships. And the reason they believe that is just because of what they're thinking about it in their mind. Like, they're not focused on people-pleasing or hurting someone's feelings. They're not worried about offending someone that they care about or that they're friends with, so they think that that's the way to do it. But I think just hearing your example of being in the costume and sitting in the discomfort, it's like you can build relationships with your people and you can build with certainty and vulnerability as long as you're just willing to sit in that difficult moment.

That's all it takes. That's the difference. You can lead with authority and kind of sidestep that difficult moment by just not allowing someone to have that moment with you. Like, you just shut them down immediately. But then that gives you the result you want maybe, where the person isn't heckling you anymore, the person isn't taking space in the meeting anymore, but does it get the true result that you want? Is it creating the experience that you want? The answer is probably no, and the only thing that's different is when you're vulnerable and you're leading with certainty and that you will be okay no matter what and you're willing to have the difficult conversation, you're just opening yourself up to minor discomfort in order to have a better experience and get better results. That's just the difference.

Angela: Right, I consider it – in my book, *The Empowered Principal* book that I wrote, I talk about micro-fails for macro-wins. And in that moment, that was a micro-fail. When you're in it, it does not feel good. It feels like a macro-fail. But the macro-win from that was just the support and trust I gained from everybody else in the room. I may not have made nice with that person who was upset in the moment. We didn't bond right then and there, but that wasn't my outcome. I wasn't expecting that. But what I was showing was I was modeling the behavior that I would wish to see in all of my parents at school, which was patience, support, and listening and seeking to understand and being able to hear somebody being harsh and

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

not having a meltdown myself and taking it personally, or using my title and status and authority to squelch this person's opinion, basically.

Stacey: Yeah, that's where the magic is. I love it.

Angela: So I have to ask you this; you are not a million-dollar earner as a coach and I assume that as you have grown your business that there must be similarities from building this business, million-dollar business, into running a school. Actually, a million dollars is way more than schools have to work with, but can you talk about what you believe are your biggest personal challenges to being a leader of a team and as you've been building your business, you've also been building your team, and school leaders are constantly asking me, like, how do I build a team? How do I connect the grade-level teams and district-wide teams? Can you speak to that in terms of how you have built up teams and any challenges that you find in building teams?

Stacey: Oh gosh, yes, 100%, because I will say, that's been my biggest source of pain in my business scaling it to a million this year. And it's been the biggest transformation I've had and the biggest thing I want to pass on to my clients. So I'll just basically tell you kind of like how I built my team and why it was inevitable to fail from the start based on why I built my team. I think there will inevitably be some takeaways there for your principals, and then what I'm doing to fix it and change it. So I hired a small handful of people for my business as it was growing; an assistant. In fact, when I hired my assistant, she had to kind of harass me to hire her. I was like, I don't even know what I would delegate to you. I was so trying to do everything on my own in my business. And she had to be like, spend a week and everything that you're doing that you don't want to do, write it down and send it to me. And so I didn't have this idea in my mind of exactly what I wanted the position to be like. I wasn't even sure exactly what she needed to do.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Then I hired a podcast producer, a Facebook Ads person to market my business and help me run Facebook Ads, someone to help me with marketing. And basically, the mindset I was in when I did the hiring was I don't know how to do these things so I'm going to hire someone to do it for me and take that off my plate. And the other mindset I was in was, I don't even want to learn this. And so basically, I had a team come on that I had zero job positions for, zero clarity on exactly how I wanted that position to go and how I wanted it to be ran and what I wanted them to do, or expectations of hours, or the way that they show up, or anything. Like, I had nothing. It was just like, this is what I need you to do. Go out and do it. And I was expecting them to come to me and have the answers, except it's my leadership. It's my business. So they only have their answers for where they are and they don't know how I want things to be run. It's like the smallest little miscommunications and it really created kind of a disaster in my business. I didn't even know what to tell my people. They would be messaging me like, "Hey what do you want me to work on?" I was so unorganized, I never knew, and then if I did have them work on something, I wouldn't give clear direction on it, so they'd come back and I wouldn't like the work. So I spent most of the year feeling super frustrated. And if I'm being super honest, kind of blaming them and feeling a little bit like a victim of, you know, they're not getting it or they're not doing it right or whatever the story was. And one of the biggest transformations I had is realizing that my team operates as smoothly as I do.

They problem-solve at the level that I problem-solve. Everything stems from me. I am the first domino. And if I'm not super clear on what I want, how could they ever be? And sometimes we think we're super clear, but clarity is like, could you explain it to an alien, to a high school student? Could you explain it to them and could they go out and do it based on your directions. That's how clear you have to be in communicating with other people. So the last couple of months of this year for me has been like really focusing on taking responsibility for every single thing, like every tiny thing. Even when it didn't feel like my fault and someone on my team – I've had a couple of major, major mess-ups in my business that cost me a lot of time

## **Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith**

and money and, in the moment, didn't feel like were my fault at all or I had any control over them at all. I'm like, no, but this is somebody else's job. This wasn't my job, like, they were responsible for that. And even bringing that into my responsibility and taking responsibility for it and how did I create this outcome in this situation has been transformational for me.

Angela: That is worth every minute of this podcast, people. Have you heard this? This is such good stuff. I'm connecting with so many things on school leadership. When I first started as a school leader, I remember having to go to IEPs, which are special education meetings, and I wasn't a special education teacher. I was a kindergarten teacher, a first-grade teacher, second-grade teacher, and then I was a reading specialist, but I didn't have the background in special-ed. So I was leaning onto my special-ed department and team just to know what to do and kind of fill me in. I was taking a back seat in that role and...

Stacey: And you know, so many people – sorry to interrupt you...

Angela: No, but that's okay, this is the whole point, we all do that. as leaders, it's so easy to do that.

Stacey: Yes, and I think the thought that creates that – because I'm sure you teach your clients that our thoughts create our results – the thought that creates that as a leader is I don't have time to figure that out. I don't have time to learn that.

Angela: Exactly, and the number one complaint by far from school leaders is they're overwhelmed, there's too much to do and not enough time, too many priorities, too many expectations.

Stacey: Yeah, and when you have that story, it's totally true for you.

Angela: Yeah, it feels really true.



## **Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith**

Stacey: Yes, when I'm building my million-dollar business, it feels – like right now, this is the level of responsibility I'm taking for my business. I took back over my schedule – like, my assistant used to schedule everything for me. Not only am I running all of my coaching and writing all of my own emails and doing all of my own marketing, writing all of my own Facebook Ad copy – like, I'm doing everything in my business right now that I was delegating to five different people, basically. I'm doing all of it. And my assistant is like, okay, so what am I doing this week? For the last three or four weeks she's like, please give me something. And I'm doing all of it on top of – and I was already overwhelmed before I realized that this was the big issue. But it's like what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Here's what I realized; if I don't have time for it now, I'm going to keep creating not enough time for it in the constantly being reactive and having to put out fires because I didn't do it right the first time. And doing it right the first time is, if you are a leader and you want to be the most effective you could possibly be, you need to understand everything.

It is your job to figure out the time, to understand every single thing so that you can effectively communicate better, you can effectively lead better, you can effectively delegate better when you truly understand. Now, am I going into my podcast producer and teaching him how to produce a podcast? No, but I am going in – and a great example is I have someone that does my – I don't want to get too technical but I send out emails for when I'm selling things, I'm doing launches – that's what we call them – we have an email series that goes out. We call that an automation. And I have someone that does that automation for me. But now, I'm also going in and getting on the phone with him when he's creating it and saying show me how you're doing this. I'm not still doing it. I'm not going in and creating the automation, but now I can have a different conversation with him because I understand what he's talking about, because I understand the terminology, I understand the process, I'm able to add better feedback and add better questions and suggest different things because I'm not freaking out and avoiding because it feels over my head or it's totally out of my realm. Now

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

I'm at least educated enough that I could have a really strong conversation about what we're doing next, if that makes sense.

Angela: That's totally, totally true. And my question for you is, is there that tipping point? Because I agree with you, I think that I had to get in and get my hands into all of the problems, sit in on all the meetings, ask the questions, do some research, dive deeper in every aspect, whether it was budgeting for the school, going to the special education meetings, diving into second language learning and how that all happens. I just had to be a part of everything so that I could know how to delegate. So could you give my leaders like a little tipping point? Like, at what point that whole delegation, I feel like teachers or school leaders do one of two things. They either delegate everything and then they have no control and everything's reactive, or they delegate nothing and then they're just working 24/7. So do you have some tips on that?

Stacey: Yes, 100%. So you have to go into everything that you're going to need to delegate or anything that you could delegate. You have to go into it knowing that you will be delegating it and making a plan for delegating it before you ever delegate it. So that whenever you do delegate it, you know exactly how to do it. You could literally – like, I was telling my assistant today, she's helping me do this. She's creating videos for every single process in my business, like every single thing. And I was joking with her and my fiancé, I was like – and he knows nothing about the coaching industry and nothing about the tech of the coaching industry. And I said, I want you to create videos so that at any given moment, if I asked my fiancé to go in and do something for me in my business, I could send him the link and he could do it based off watching the video. So you have to just really know.

You have to be willing to delegate and you have to say what could I delegate, what are the things I could potentially delegate? But then you have to go learn them and figure out how to teach them in such a clear direct way that you could teach literally anybody, and then you go teach it

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

and then you delegate it once you know it really well. So people are either delegating too soon or delegating because they don't know how to do something or they don't want to learn. Usually it's that they don't want to learn how to do something because it's difficult to learn. So they're delegating too soon or they're not delegating because they don't know how to delegate because they haven't looked at it from that perspective of if I were going to delegate, what are all the steps to this? Like for example, for your listeners, they can choose one thing that they're spending time on that they don't think they could delegate.

And if they just spent 30 minutes to an hour a week sitting down and thinking about if I were going to teach exactly what I do for this thing and exactly how I do it to an alien, to a high school kid, to my husband, my wife, whoever that isn't involved in my industry. If I were going to explain it, what would be the steps, and just sitting down and being willing to write the steps and see if you missed anything and see what else would you tell someone about it and how else would you instruct them to do it. And if you can spend that investment, that time investment there, then you'll feel so comfortable to delegate it because you'll know that it's going to be done right because you're so clear and direct.

Angela: So golden, so, so golden. That is so it. They need to understand what they're delegating, why they're delegating it, and how they want it delegated. Good stuff.

Stacey: They've got to do it before they delegate it, otherwise – and this is something else to think about, just any relationship that you have with someone on your team or in your leadership arena, a difficult teacher or a difficult anyone, anyone that you're having a problem with is because of you. It is because of the way you've led. It's the way you've shown up. It's the way you've taught. It's the way you've communicated. And listen, this isn't to say for you to feel bad and blame yourself or get all down on yourself or judge yourself. If you take responsibility and it is coming from you and it is your, quote en quote, fault, now you have the ability to

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

respond to it. Now you have the ability to see how you can influence every result.

Angela: Yes, exactly. That's taking your power back. That's everything I'm teaching in how to lead an empowered school. So many of my clients are saying that it's somebody else's fault. They're blaming and they're basically just handing over their power to other people...

Stacey: Yeah, because when someone else is the problem, they have to change in order for you to get the solution you're looking for.

Angela: If they are the problem, it's their solution and they can decide not to solve it for you.

Stacey: Yeah, you can't control them, no matter how much authority you think you are imposing. You know, we think that we can control other people, and we totally can't. And it's just going to be so frustrating, exhausting, and just run you down to blame somebody else for it and to try to get them to change and to try to get them to take responsibility. And I don't think we can ask other people to do what we're unwilling to do. And I think the shift I've seen in my business is as I take responsibility for everything, guess what I'm seeing my team do...

Angela: Yep, they're stepping up, right?

Stacey: Even when they don't need to because I've taken responsibility for it. Like, now we're having conversations, no really, it's my responsibility... no really, it was my responsibility. And now, when both parties are being totally responsible – and the other thing is when my Facebook Ads person recently made a big huge mistake in my business and he was just totally like, "This was my fault. This was my responsibility." And because I take responsibility and I know what it feels like to say this was my fault, I messed up, I didn't go beat him up. I didn't go make him feel worse about it

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

than he did. I was like, yeah, okay, this was the mistake; how do we fix it? And we just didn't spend any time getting all upset about the mistake. It was just like, okay this happened, thanks for figuring out what the problem was. Thanks for taking responsibility. I'm going to take responsibility for my part because I should have led better in this situation as well. I should have made a different decision so you weren't the person making the decision. And now, what are we going to do about it? Let's just move forward.

Angela: Right, and that's forward motion, and you're not spinning in just negativity and what should have could have would have been, because it's already happened. So it's just the ability to move on and stay empowered and keep that momentum moving forward.

Stacey: Yeah.

Angela: Great, so I have another question for you; your first niche was coaching multi-level marketers. And you coached leaders with some teams up to several thousand people. So in your opinion, what's the biggest difference you see in leaders who get coaching versus leaders who opt-out of coaching?

Stacey: Yeah, so this is so powerful because I did coach a lot of leaders. And just so your people know what multi-level marketing is so they're not like, what? It's like when you have a business with Mary Kay or Rodan + Fields or Beach Body, and they're selling a product as a company and leading other people. And I see it the same in coaching as well. But people who get coached and what they learn is a powerful skill that we were just talking about – the most powerful skill – which is taking responsibility. And when you take responsibility, what happens is you also learn a really heightened sense of awareness. And because you're taking responsibility and because you're aware of everything – so you're aware of everything and you're taking responsibility, now you also have this insane ability to problem-solve, for yourself and for other people. So I'll give you a really specific instance.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

I know that you teach the STEAR method. So one of the things I'm always doing is very similar. I'm always bringing my clients into how they have created their results through their thinking. And when they really learn that, no matter what issue they're having on their team, maybe they've got 2000 people and none of those people are showing up for training calls, then when they're taking responsibility, they have the power to change that and look at how that's being created from their standpoint so they can start to make change and they can see what thoughts are creating that result of people not showing up for them. And most likely, it's that they're not showing up for themselves. And then what happens, as a leader, is when you understand how our thoughts create our results and the impact of the way that we think influences the way that we interact with other humans. When my clients would get – one of the big things multi-level marketers deal with a lot is they get constant text messages from the people in their team freaking out.

Like, people didn't sign with them, people quit, they didn't hit their numbers, they're not going to hit their numbers, all these things. And when you can help yourself problem-solve at a really high level, what happens is you can also help other people problem-solve at a really high level, so you no longer get in the emotional pool – we call it the emotional pool. You no longer start feeling negative or have a negative reaction when somebody else is coming to you in panic. Like, your panic isn't ignited or brought to the surface. You're able to stay super logical and problem-solve at a much higher level than when you aren't getting coaching and you're not getting help, you lose perspective. You don't have that sense of responsibility and awareness because our brains literally – like even listening to this podcast, let me just say, listening to this podcast isn't enough. You need a coach. You need to work with a coach because you're going to hear in this podcast, like what we talked about today, the listeners will hear what's relevant to them and what they think they can take and implement and what feels like a good idea, but there's this whole other stuff that they're going to even miss. It's going to go in one ear and out the other because that's the way our brains are trained to be.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Our brains are trained to be super emotional and get in fight or flight anytime there's a problem, because a problem means certain death. Our brain can't associate emotional problems with physical problems, potential emotional death versus physical death. And so we have a really hard time as humans controlling our fight or flight response and reacting, and you really need that outside perspective to show you all of those things and help you start to be the watcher of situations and the watcher of your mind, the watcher of other people's minds, so that you can just problem-solve at such a crazy high level compared to other people. It's like you get this super power.

Angela: It is so amazing. And it's funny, the first thing people ask me all the time is why do I need a coach or do I need a coach? And the answer is, you don't need a coach, nobody needs a coach. But I will tell you this – and I will tell you this from a place of absolute certainty having had coaching for the last 10 years – you don't have to have a coach, but you will always have blind spots. There will always be things in your life that you cannot self-coach through. So even when you know the STEAR cycle and you can run a STEAR cycle on a thought you're having, there are times – the brain has certain types of thoughts that you are like, okay I can see how I can change this. But we have some very deeply rooted belief systems within our – it almost feels like our DNA. It's so deeply rooted and we've been thinking it for so long that without the support and guidance and feedback from a coach, we will not allow ourselves to question very deeply-rooted beliefs. Beliefs are just thoughts you think over and over again. So if you have something you really, really believe in, you are not going to challenge yourself. It's like when you go to the gym, if you don't have a coach, you might do a couple of lifts or whatever, do some weight training, but you're not going to push yourself to the extent to which you would when you've got a coach standing there next to you holding you accountable.

Stacey: I agree, that's why I actually have a trainer, for that exact reason because I know when I workout I can't push myself to the degree that she pushes me. So I actually had a client that messaged me this morning and

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

she was saying how she's having an issue with her niche and her niche is not – like her business brand is really problematic. And she was trying to solve the problem and get help from me to solve the problem. And the thing that I responded to her was, here's the problem with trying to solve a problem from believing there's a problem. The moment that you think there's a problem because you see – I literally told her, you told me that your niche and your branding is causing you a lot of problems. You said that like it was truth. And I just want to offer it's not truth. And so whenever someone has a problem, they think it's truth. They think that the problem is true, they think that the way they see it is true, and then they go to problem-solve on top of that.

So she was trying to change her niche and get super clear on her branding from a place of believing it was problematic. And when you already have a thought about something being problematic, it's like if you think that you have a child that's problematic or you think you have a teacher that's problematic, like a difficult teacher, the moment you have that label, you think that's true and then you go to lead them and fix them and change the situation from a place of believing there is a problem. And coaching helps you cut that off, like cut that cycle off, and go all the way back to getting clarity and getting out of it being a problem. You may still want to change it. Like, my client still might want to change her niche, but the place to do it is not from saying it's problematic and it's just like, you know – I teach my clients about difficult clients. They always come at me like, I have this difficult client. And I'm like, okay, well let's not solve the result that you're getting on the issue that's happening from a place of believing this client is difficult. Let's clean that up first and then let's look at the problem from, like, a bigger elevated perspective where we're not labeling things. Let's be neutral and let's look at the problem from a neutral place. And I think that's what a coach helps you do.

Angela: It's so good and it's so true. And I know, when you were coaching me while I was a school leader, we spent a great deal of time getting my thoughts to be neutral about the job and the people I was working with so



## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

that I could make a decision from a place of clarity and empowerment, and really neutrality, in terms of how did I want to go forward with my career. And until I could get clear on those, which I could not have done by myself because I couldn't see around those blind spots or corners in my own mind. I had to have somebody who was completely outside of my situation to illuminate where my thinking was leading me and why I was tripping, kind of on backspace repeat. It was kind of a repeat loop over and over in my head until I could get a coach who could stop the thought, kind of interrupt that thought, and really allow myself to look at it from an observer's standpoint and be like, hey, wait a minute, does this thought continue to serve me or not? And from there, make the decisions that I needed to make in my professional and personal life.

Stacey: Yeah, and I think that was so important for your transition from, like, deciding to leave education and then use your super power to just help more educators in a bigger way. Even then, it's like, you know, you and I both teach – I'm sure that you don't do anything from a place of reactionary or thinking something has gone wrong or, you know, unhappiness or negative emotion in any way. It's like, you don't leave your job until you learn to love your job and be totally responsible for it, or you don't leave a spouse until you learn to love that spouse and be totally responsible for your own happiness. We have this belief that we can't leave things or we can't fix things unless there's been this negative, unless we think there's a problem.

We can't do things from abundance just because, you know. We can't make more money unless we need more money or we can't leave a job unless we're unhappy or we can't leave a partner unless we're unhappy. And it's like, getting to the place of being so responsible and feeling the way you want to feel, and then making decisions, that's when you really take back control of your life and that's when your life stops being – you aren't waking up every morning in reaction to your life, but you're very intentionally creating it.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Angela: I love that so much. And my personal example of that, for those of you who've been following me for a while, you know that I recently had a big wedding celebration up in Tahoe last June, and I actually eloped the year before that. And what is so interesting is that I had been married previously and I had made a decision not to get married again because I used to believe that marriage was the problem, not me. It couldn't be me, right? And so I fell in love again and I've been with Mitch for over 10 years. And the beautiful thing about our relationship is that through coaching, I learned to love him the same exact way regardless of whether we were married or not. So my marrying him had nothing to do with thinking that he was going to make me happier or that I would become happier by being married. The beautiful thing about the wedding celebration was it was a complete choice that we just decided to celebrate our love in that manner with the people, the friends and family that we love the most, and making a decision from that place as well as that's how I had to make the decision to leave my job, my district of 22 years. It was really heartbreaking for me to leave the people and families and the communities that I really loved. But I knew that my calling was to serve education being outside of the educational system. I knew it was time to basically make changes within the system by being out of the system, if that makes sense.

Stacey: Yeah, but none of that awareness came until you – I remember that work with you and I and the work with the job and getting to a place when you were feeling so empowered. And I remember even you wanting to coach so bad and we go to the place where you really felt and believed and were experiencing bringing your coaching into the work environment and getting that fulfillment already.

Angela: Yes.

Stacey: So even like your decision to leave wasn't coming from, I love this thing called coaching and I'm not able to fulfill it. It was like, I'm totally fulfilling it, and from that place, I really want to go out and do even more. And I even remember when you made the decision to marry Mitch and you

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

were kind of like, if my recollection is correct, you were in a place that was just like, we're doing this. We're just getting married and this is the next thing we're doing. But there was nothing in you that felt like that was going to make you happier. And what was amazing was to watch it make you happier.

Angela: It's true because I entered into that relationship with no expectations and it already was as good as I thought it could be and I think by my choosing to even go – this was the other thing, there's so many levels. You always hear this, go all in, hustle, and all of these phrases that we say when we want to work hard and grow and expand our capabilities. But there's so many levels of going all in, and what I thought was going all in for years was definitely serving me well. And then when I did my own thought work around my relationship, both with my job and with my person, my life, it presented itself in such a new level. It's like, wow, I had no idea that this was even possible. And just by continuing to coach myself just in my career, in my parenting, in my relationships, my family and my friends, I have blown my own mind. Can I just say, the last two years of my life have been almost speechless. They just leave me speechless, but it's because I am willing to get super uncomfortable. I'm willing to call myself out. I'm willing to let you call me out and be like, nope, this is not the level we're playing at anymore.

And it makes me just get up, you know. I feel the disappointment and then I use that disappointment to motivate me to be like, I want to be the best version of myself. So school leaders out there, whether you want to be in the job or not, that decision doesn't come from a place, ever, of lack or scarcity. You have to make that decision from a place of abundance and gratitude and what I call enoughness. You have enough. You have what it takes to be a leader, whether you're a first year or a veteran principal. And what coaching can do for you, I just feel like it expedites the entire learning process and it put the power right back into your own hands. And the beauty about taking responsibility is that yes, you feel the burn of responsibility, but you feel the empowerment, and that's the gift. That is the

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

win. That is the macro-win that you get when you allow yourself to embrace full ownership, full responsibility, zero blame.

Stacey: Yes, so good.

Angela: Okay, I know we're going so long here but this is just too good, I can't stop. One last question.

Stacey: Let's do it.

Angela: Okay, let's do this. So, going all in, have you ever had the experience with clients, Stacey, where they really want to reach out to you but they really fear reaching out for coaching because they're afraid of it or they don't know what it is, and why do you think that is? And how do you help them gain clarity on making that decision for themselves?

Stacey: To reach out for coaching?

Angela: Yes, so I'm guessing that I've got a few school leaders out there who are intrigued, they're interested, they're listening, but they're not really sure. They fear reaching out for coaching for whatever reason. I have some speculations, but I'm just interested on how you frame that for your clients and how do you support them? Here's why I'm asking the question; it's one thing as I'm learning and growing and expanding as a coach, I want to be as open and transparent with my clients as possible, but I want this skill to transfer to my school leaders out there. So there are school leaders who could be teachers, who could be other staff members, perhaps your support staff or parents who are afraid to come to you and talk with you and work with you and get your coaching as a school leader. So how do you frame that for your potential clients or potential people who want to approach you but they're very afraid to go down the path of coaching?

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Stacey: Yeah, there's always those people. You're going to have people that are totally willing to step up and say what they need or say their opinion or express their displeasure in an environment or offer up what they think could be better. And then there's going to be people that you cannot get to seek you out and ask for help for anything. And the reason for that is, I think, a couple of things. I think, number one, we don't reach out when we don't think that there's a solution available. Like, when we're in total resistance – and the way that you can think about this is like, anything that you feel stubborn or stuck in and it's just like, you know, it's just total crap or it's all bad and there is no silver lining, or this is a problem that there's no solution for or it's not fixable or they can't help me. It's like all that mentality where they just don't believe there is a solution, so we don't seek things out. We don't seek solutions out that we don't believe are there. So that's a big piece of it is just not feeling like whatever is happening is solvable. And then I think the second thing is the vulnerability piece. Like, we're swinging all the way back around to the very beginning. Like, I teach vulnerability so big in my work because I think it's the scariest emotion. I think we cannot – I think all roads lead back to vulnerability. People talk about fear a lot, but vulnerability is literally fear of emotional or physical harm, like being exposed to either.

So it's like the potential of emotional or physical harm is vulnerability. And so I think it's the scariest emotion, and I think it takes a lot to reach out and ask for help and even think that we need help or that we're responsible for something that happened or that we can't do it. Like, we're trained to like need to be able to do it on our own and what that means about us if we're able to do it on our own, and we're trained to just not ask for help because it's a vulnerable thing to ask for help. And we're trained to believe that it means we're powerless instead of powerful and we're trained to believe that we're weak and that we shouldn't need help and all of that. and so the vulnerability of asking for help is a very humbling thing; to ask for coaching or to ask for help or to say that you don't know how to do something or you're not doing something well. That's the work I'm doing with my coaches right now, being willing to come every week and be like, listen, this is what

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

I'm not doing very well right now, or to have to have that conversation with my team and say, hey listen, you've probably noticed but I'm not doing a very great job at this leader thing. I'm struggling and just so you know, I'm really working on it.

Angela: That is so important for school leaders to hear. So guys, let me just say it straight out; no school leader knows exactly what they're doing all of the time. And I'm talking – let me give you a quick example. When I was a new principal, there was a veteran principal on our team. I think she was like 20 years in. And I said, "Judy, does this ever get better?" And she said, "Angela, no. It just doesn't." It doesn't get easier, it doesn't take less time, it just never gets easier. So believing that it should be easier than it is is going to set you up for a lot of pain. But I believe this about what you said, Stacey; we teach children at a very young age not to ask for help. We teach them that lack of knowledge equals weakness and I think we really do it to our school leaders. I know when I started as a school leader it was like, congratulations, here's your new school, be off with you. And you're just sent off into the deep blue sea to try and figure this whole thing out. And when you do ask questions, people do talk.

The reality is that people do judge you if you ask questions or if you ask for help or if you want support. You know, they're like, can't you figure this out on your own or can't you do it... So you have to be willing, school leaders, to ask anyway, to ask in spite of other people judging you for asking, because in the end, it's your responsibility to own your own growth and learning as a school leader; you need to ask. You need to get the support. And if your district's not giving it to you, it's okay to seek outside for that support.

Stacey: Yes, so good. It's so good. I like to think of it as you're actually stronger and you're a better leader and you have more authority when you're willing to do what you want other people to do.

## **Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith**

Angela: Yes, 100,000 million billion percent. Oh my gosh, girl, this has just been the highlight of my year having you on this podcast and having you share, with my audience, my journey and how I've gone from A to B and through your support, through your coaching, and why coaching is so valuable. And believe me, it is my ultimate mission to bring this type of emotional wellbeing and emotional fitness work to our schools. It is so lacking. School leaders out there, if you're listening and you've been reaching out, thank you so much. Please continue to share the wealth and knowledge with other people and other leaders. It is okay to ask for the support that you need. You are not in an easy job, so don't think it should be easy. And Stacey was here to tell you how far I've come in my coaching work and how much further I still have to go, and she is such a legacy when it comes to building relationships, being open and authentic and transparent. She's one of the most open people I know. She's just fully herself in all of her honesty and that's what made me love her so much. So, Stacey, thank you for your time today. Thank you for joining us, and I just learn something new from you every single time we have a conversation. So bless you and thank you for the work you're doing in the world, and thank you for being with us today.

Stacey: Oh, my goodness, that was the best little acknowledgement ever. I am so happy to have been on, and anything for you. You're one of my star students. I have loved working with you and I just love the work that you're creating in the world. I think it's so valuable and I look forward to – you know, I'm going to have kids one day and I want them to come and learn from educators who have managed minds and are taking responsibility and doing this work. So I'm really grateful for the trail that you're blazing.

Angela: Thank you so, so much. I love the work I'm doing and I love the work you're doing. So have an amazing rest of your week and happy holidays to you. Take care, and we will be talking very soon.

Stacey: Alright, I'll see you later.

## Ep #52: Coaching Conversations with Stacey Smith

Angela: Okay, thanks, bye.

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