

## Ep #53: Building a Relationship with YOU



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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Hello, Empowered Principals, welcome to episode 53.

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.

Well hello, my Empowered Principals. Happy New Year. Welcome to 2019. I am so excited for this year. And this day is especially cool because this particular podcast literally drops in New Year's Day. I love that so much. It is such a great way to start 2019.

Welcome to the New Year. I hope you've had an amazing holiday season so far and you are enjoying your break. So today, we are starting a new model for the podcast. So what I've done is I've created monthly themes, where each week of the month, we will cover different aspects of a topic pertinent to school leadership.

For listeners who are also my private coaching clients, you will also receive an e-workbook that corresponds with the monthly theme so that you can dive even deeper into the work that I describe on the podcast. This expansion of the podcast has definitely stretched me as a coach. And my hope is that each of you will gain further insight into who you are, whom you want to serve, and what life you want to lead.

So the theme for January is relationships. We'll dive into how to build a relationship with yourself, and then with others. We'll also talk about the challenges of relationships, why we have challenging relationships, and some ways to redirect ourselves when we get caught up in those challenges.

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I'm starting the calendar year with relationships because I believe that building relationships is, first of all, one of the most important actions you can take as a school leader, and second, the momentum and energy associated with the New Year, with this time of year, it really inspires us to reflect, create new goals, and commit to new actions that bring about lasting changes in our lives.

Today, we're going to start with the fundamentals. I'm going to cover a lot on this first episode. So for those of you who are new to the podcast, welcome. I'm going to spend a great deal talking about the foundations of my work and my teachings and how I help my clients.

However, for my listeners who've been with me for a while, there is plenty of content for you as well. No matter where we are in the process of self-development, it always comes back to these essential topics. We're going to start with the relationship we must always be cultivating, and that is the one with ourselves.

The concept that humans have layers of identities has been studied by countless doctors, psychologists, and therapists for centuries. The basic premise is that there is the essence of who we are, and I call this our heart and soul. The identity that we've created through our thoughts and socialization on the other hand, I call this aspect our brain, or our thoughts.

You may hear me also refer to these two selves using the label that Dr. Martha Beck identified as the essential self, which is the essence of who you are, the soul, the heart, which originates in our heart, and the social self, which originates in our brain. Our heart is the part of us that is all-knowing. It knows who we are, what we are called to do, what we love, what we stand for, and why we are here. It is pure love, pure perfection, and pure knowledge. Nothing, absolutely nothing can penetrate it.

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It is the part of you that was created before you were born, and the part of you that remains when you cease to walk the earth. Our brain is the part of us that produces thoughts. It generates thousands of thoughts per day. The brain's task is to keep us alive and functioning. It is constantly analyzing our surroundings and creating thoughts that tell us whether or not something is deemed safe.

Now, you have to give your brain some kudos here. It has done an excellent job of protecting us and keeping us safe since the beginning of mankind, and it is because of our brain that our external lives have evolved tremendously over the years. It has allowed human beings to make the impossible possible.

So, I'm going to go really deep here, guys. I'm going to start you off deep, but it's a very foundational concept. We have two selves. We have our heart and soul, which is our essential self, and we have this part of us that is called the social self, or our brain. And we have to be able to see the difference between the two.

We experience them constantly on a daily basis, but we have to be able to separate ourselves from the two and identify that we have two different, kind of like almost voices in our head talking to us and steering us in a certain direction.

So stick with me on this podcast, guys. It might feel too deep and it might get heavy. You might have to listen to it a couple of times, but I promise you, it is so cool when you get it. So the heart, the soul, is what drives us. The brain is the part of us that processes, that problem-solves, that seeks pleasure and avoids pain, that keeps us safe, that makes us – you've heard of the fight or flight; that is coming from our brain.

So our brain, unlike our heart, is influenced by all of our surroundings. The thoughts that it creates are influenced by the people in our lives, the

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conditions under which we live, and the experiences that we go through on a daily basis.

The beauty of this quality of the brain is because our brain is impressionable, we also have the ability to influence the thoughts, however we would like. We can actually train our brain to think in certain ways. We can opt to change our belief systems and practice new ways of thinking that better serve us in our current moment.

Unfortunately, most people do not spend time acknowledging this extreme privilege. They unknowingly believe that their thoughts are just the facts of life and that their thoughts will go unquestioned. The brain loves not to be challenged, which is the downside of our brain, you guys.

It thrives on being right. It wants to be in charge, and it insists on certainty, safety, and efficiency. It does this because it's needed us to believe that without a doubt, it is correct so that we will definitely take the action necessary to stay alive. Can you see that?

The brain needs us to believe so deeply, so quickly, so swiftly, and so profoundly that we take the action we need when we are, in fact, in a flight or fight situation. However, as we have evolved as a species, the brain, it cannot interpret the differences between the physical dangers of living and dying, or the emotional and mental, or what I call perceived dangers.

It anticipates the same level of consequence for either physical threats or emotional and mental threats. That is why social death feels as equally scary to us as does physical death. And that is why we hold back from doing things that we perceive as socially risky.

When we think we're going to be socially humiliated or rejected or made fun of, embarrassed, or humiliated, or we think we're going to fail and

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people are going to think poorly of us, we will shy away from those activities because our body, our brain, cannot identify the difference between the two threats. And that's important to know because when we are truly in danger, we want to take that action; we want to believe our brain.

But when it's an emotional danger and when we know that emotion is the worst thing that can happen, feeling badly or embarrassed or humiliated, whatever you are afraid to feel, once you know that's the worst of it and you can feel that and no harm is done and you can move on, then you can start to make significant lifelong changes in your career and in your life.

So, knowing this, or at least trying it on for size, I want to ask you a question; have you ever experienced a time when you felt two ways at the same time? Perhaps you've always had a strong desire to, say, go surfing. That's something I think would be super cool. But I'm also deathly afraid of drowning.

Something about surfing feels so wild and free and you're pulled in to give it a try, but every time you think about signing up for lessons, your body shivers in fear that you'll end up as shark bait, right? I love the ocean, I love living by the ocean, I love being by the ocean and I'm entranced by it, but I have a very deep fear of- drowning in it.

So I have a dissonance in my body. That is called incongruence; when we are thinking two different thoughts or we have two different desires, our brain desires us not to go in the water for fear we'll die, our heart wants to feel the energy of the ocean and the aliveness that comes with conquering a new skill.

That excitement and anticipation and just wild and freedom, that whole feeling, those two are opposing thoughts. You have incongruence between

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your mind and your heart and that creates a feeling of dissonance in the body.

And the only reason we ever feel incongruence within ourselves is because we have opposing beliefs systems. The most common example I run across in my coaching business is that of the school leader that says she loves her job, yet she feels a pull deep within her gut that wants more freedom and flexibility in her life.

Her brain is telling her that hey, this is a great job. It has great pay, great benefits, you love your staff, love the kids, all of those things. It generates all these thoughts and almost like an argument that punches down any opposing thoughts that your heart or soul might have because the brain wants to insist on certainty.

And what I mean by that is the certainty of the known. Like, you know you're going to get a paycheck every month, you know the routines of your school and your district, you know the people you work with, so that certainty of the known is better to the brain than the uncertainty of the unknown.

A new job sounds dangerous to the brain. It's not safe. People might not like it that you left. You could be completely ostracized by your current social group. You don't want to be left out in the cold with no money and no shelter and no food. Your brain comes up with pretty wild stories about how terrible life's going to be if you change and enter into the zone of danger, right?

Your brain also wants to be efficient. It doesn't want to learn something new. It tells you that would take too much time. It tells you you're too busy, you don't have the time, and we just can't be bothered by new things. So your brain is going to come up with a story in order to maintain certainty, safety, and efficiency.

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This happens with any thought that is perceived as a challenge to what your brain knows as the status quo. And for most people, our social conditioning, or the way we're taught to think and believe, heavily favors the brain.

We are conditioned to trust the thoughts our brain produces over the desires of our own heart. And over time, the brain's authority over the heart grows to such a strength that our heart's voice becomes barely heard or even acknowledged.

This is why so many people stay in jobs that they hate. They choose to believe that they need that job for the money, that the only way to make money is to work for someone else, or that they should stick with what they were trained to do because that's what they paid for. That's what they went to college for, so by golly, the better stick on this path, right?

And I think that's insane. No wonder people buffer with food or alcohol or pop pills or over-shop or binge on Netflix, because they have this desire within them that's continually shut down and they don't see any hope in fulfilling that dream. That's pretty depressing, my friends.

So I'm here to tell you, your heart has a voice. And we're going to work on that because the problem with this imbalance between the brain and the heart is that the brain's ability to understand our fears is faulty. It holds us back when there is no real danger.

A great example of this is the fear of public speaking. As a school leader, speaking in front of audiences is definitely a part of the job. And you may even want deeply down inside of you to be a strong public speaker. However, you feel fear every time you're asked to speak.



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The reason you're feeling the fear is because your brain believes that public speaking is a danger. It's thinking thoughts like, people are not going to like what I have to say. I might mess up or I might say something stupid, or I don't want to be laughed at, or I don't want to be heckled.

And what's funny, guys, is all of those things could be true. You could be heckled, you could get laughed at, people could think you're stupid, people could whatever, not like what you have to say. And your brain tricks you into believing or talks you into this that you're so sold that all of these things will happen, that you back away from getting better at social speaking.

It perceives that social danger as a very real and live threat. The body's response to those thoughts about that emotional attack is the same as if you were actually entering into a life or death situation. And unfortunately, those messages from the brain do not serve us if we wish to pursue a fulfilling career and a more balanced life.

So the goal is to align our brains and our hearts as often as possible. And that is where the real magic happens. When we allow our heart to lead the way, our brain serves as the implementer and the problem-solver, and it does the work of making our goals become our reality.

So basically, what we want to do is we want to shift who's in charge and who is doing the work. The way most of us function is like this; our brain's in charge, our brain's the boss, our brain's the bully, and it tells the heart, no, no, no, we're not doing that. That wouldn't be safe. That would be stupid. That doesn't make sense. Social norms tell me no so therefore you're not getting your way.

And she has to find a way to feel a different way about or feel forced into something that does not feel in alignment with her. What we want to do is put her in the driver's seat so that she's leading the way and then your brain is doing the work of, okay, I see where I'm aligned, I see what you

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want, now I've got to figure out how to get there. I've got to figure out how to problem-solve, how to make A plus B equals C, how to align with what the heart's desire is. And I've got to problem-solve and figure out the way.

So how do we get our brains and our hearts to learn to trust one another? We much consciously decide to build a relationship with each of them. That's what this podcast is all about; relationships with self. We need to understand how our heart communicates with us and how our brain communicated with us.

We must explore each of their needs, meaning the heart and the brain, and learn to identify when a need is not being met. We must know that they do not align naturally and that it's up to us to decide to align them in more harmony.

So I like to look at these two little selves as separate entities of me. I have a brain that tells me all kinds of amazing things, and I have a heart that's guiding me and leading me in this knowingness. I don't tend to trust my heart because there isn't tangible evidence that what she's telling me is true, but on the flip, I don't want to always buy into what my brain is saying because I know that sometimes the way it functions is like an error message. It's a faulty message to me. It's fake news, as I tell my clients.

As we've discussed, the brain communicates to us in the form of thought. It produces thousands of thoughts per day, many of which run through our mind on a very subconscious level. It's kind of like background music. A part of us acknowledges the presence of it, but we're not actively engaging with the music. We're not singing along with it or we're not getting up and dancing to it. It's just in the background playing.

What we want to do is become practiced at acknowledging as many thoughts as we possibly can. What we want to do is bring them to the

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forefront of our consciousness in order to better understand what our brain is trying to communicate.

The brain plays a very important role in achieving our greatest desires and goals, but it must be tempered, or it will take over and bully your heart into submission. That's not what we want.

Now, the way the heart communicates to us is through our emotions, which are vibrations in our body. Our brain produces a thought and our heart vibrates with a certain level of intensity. When our heart aligns with our thoughts, we feel intense excitement, anticipation, pleasure, and happiness, joy, and all of the good things.

When our heart does not align with our thoughts, we feel heaviness, resistance, avoidance, anger, fear, resentment, all of the bad stuff. Most people want to feel good vibrations all of the time, or they believe they should feel good vibrations all of the time.

And they believe that the way to achieve that is to do more of what the brain is telling you to do; work longer hours, go to every single event that your school puts on, get your EDD, volunteer for all the committees in the world. While these thoughts are well-intentioned, they are coming from a place of fear; fear of not getting it all done, fear of not being good enough, fear of not getting the test scores you want, fear of not being liked, fear of not knowing enough, fear of not participating enough. There's always these fears that are flying around, right?

Your brain is really skilled at making these thoughts feel absolutely true. It seems like you should be doing what it's telling you to do and you have been conditioned by society that the answer is correct to following through on these thoughts.

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I like to step back and see the brain as a boss who gets results, but the results do not feel as amazing because they're created through fear and intimidation. You may have a leader who leads through fear and intimidation, and so you can relate to the brain behaving in the same manner.

Now, you can bully yourself into hustling for so long before your heart will start to create so much dissonance in the body that you can no longer continue to use that same approach. You can hustle for a while, guys, but I'm telling you, there will be a time where the body, she will do anything in her power to get your attention.

You will get sick, you will have accidents, you will get forgetful about certain things, you'll miss a deadline. There's all these little things that happen when your heart is not being heard and it's trying to get your attention. For most of us – this is so sad for me but I know that it's true. It was true for me. Our heart has been denied by the brain for so long that when we do start finally paying attention, it doesn't want to believe us.

You know like when someone fakes you out for so long – kind of the boy who cried wolf kind of a thing. When we start to listen to her, she won't believe us. She'll be like, yeah right, prove it, because for years, she's experienced you not following through and really listening to her.

It thinks we're going to go back to our old ways, which is probably true because we've done that so many times before. We've said we're going to do something that feels incredibly uplifting only to allow our brains to talk us out of it because it isn't practical, responsible, or socially acceptable.

The key to living a more empowered life is to listen to that faint whisper of your heart. Let that vibration rise to the surface and be heard. Acknowledge what it wants and earn its trust by following through with your actions.

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When you allow your heart to guide you, the brain, it's going to initially squawk. But if you acknowledge the brain, say thank you, brain, take note of its warning, and then take the action you want in spite of its warning, you will then create new evidence to the brain that what your heart wanted was in your best interest all along.

The more you can do this, the more your heart will trust in you to listen to her, allow her to lead, and the cool part is the brain will start to support you through actions, results, and new belief systems. And the best news of all – listen for it – you have already done this hundreds of times in your life.

You did it when you started playing an instrument or took up basketball in elementary school. It happened to you when you got your driver's license or when you attended your first high school dance. It happened when you got accepted to college and said goodbye to your high school friends in your hometown. It happened when you started your first day of student teaching and the first day you set foot into your own classroom for the first time.

It happened when you accepted your role as school leader and when you courageously stood in front of your staff for the first staff meeting. Listen up, your heart has always known the way. It even knows the how. You need to let her lead. You need to practice listening to both of your selves. They work together.

When you are in flow, that is when you are alignment, those two, that's when they're in harmony. And the more you practice listening to both of them, you are going to develop such a deep trust and a belief within yourself that will guide you towards your full potential, thus creating the most optimal life possible.

2019 is your time to get empowered. I want you to commit and go get it. Have an amazing, amazing week.

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Hello, my fellow leaders. For those of you who are my private clients, you have access to the *Empowered Principal Podcast* workbook that accompanies this month's theme. In the workbook are daily and monthly activities that allow you to dive even deeper into this work and expedite transformation in your career and your life.

If you, listener, are ready to take your leadership and life to the next level, sign up for a free consult call today. You can find me at [angelakellycoaching.com](http://angelakellycoaching.com). I'll see you there. Take care.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit [www.angelakellycoaching.com](http://www.angelakellycoaching.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.