

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals, welcome to episode 59.

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 there, my fellow Empowered Principals. How are you doing? By the time this episode airs, Valentine's day is near, which means, for you, a lot of excitement and a lot of candy on your campus. And, all the pink, red, purple, and white construction paper is going to be completely out of stock in your staff room, am I right? That's a truth bomb right there, huh?

But it also means, on a little deeper level, that you have another opportunity to spread some love for your staff and for yourself. Be sure that however you decide to treat your staff, that you also include yourself. Remember this; if you are running yourself into the ground taking care of everything else and everyone else without taking care of yourself, or very little care of yourself, you are not going to be at your best to lead.

We know this intellectually, but we don't always act on what we know. The way you treat yourself is the model for the way you allow others to treat you. So don't be ignoring and denying yourself, ladies and gentlemen. You are a superhuman as it is, so give yourself some love this Valentine's season.

Hey, before we begin, I want to give a quick shout-out to one of my clients. I'm kind of adding this adlib, but I just met with her today. She's wonderful and I have to share her story quick. Her name is Amber, and Amber has been showing up 100% for our work together.

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

She does all of her homework. She asks really great questions, and she's really honest at sharing the thoughts that she's having, which allows us to examine her thoughts and then shift them into thoughts that feel so much better for her. She recently told me that she feels a shift in the way she's starting to think and feel, and that she's now able to recognize the thoughts that feel negative to her. And in some cases, she's telling herself, like, "Hey, that's not true."

I love that. I love that she shared that story with me. And I have to say, her transformation has just been in a few short weeks of coaching together, and it's been amazing. But it really doesn't surprise me because Amber has been so open to learning, so open to being honest about the thoughts that she is thinking, even when they're terrible-in-her-mind thoughts, or they're mean thoughts.

She has been so open to learning how to self-coach and she's putting it into play. I'm just amazed by her. She's so much fun and I love her so much. I have to say, I feel this amazingness when a client creates more awareness in their life, and that's exactly how I would feel when, as a kindergarten teacher, my students would first get that little spark of, "I get this, I know how to read."

I love teaching literacy and reading. When those kids were able to read their first sentences and they would get this sparkle in their eye because they know they've unlocked that key to literacy, it's the same energy that I feel in clients when they realize that they're onto something so super powerful in their lives. So, I want to send Amber so much love and so much applause for her willingness and her work. Amber, keep on it. You're doing amazing things.

Okay, on with the show. Last week, we talked about what self-coaching is, why it's important, and how to get us started. This week, we'll move into how you shift from your subconscious thoughts having all the control into

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

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

taking more ownership and consciously choosing thoughts you want to think based on how you want to feel and the results that you want to achieve.

So, step one was the brain drain. As we discussed last week, the first step in self-coaching is to simply become aware of all the thoughts floating around in that pretty little head of yours. Your brain produces thoughts at an incredible rate, upwards of 40-50 thoughts per minute. That's almost a thought per second really when you think about it. And there's no way you can process every one of these thoughts in real time.

The way you become aware of what you're actually thinking is to write them down. Slow that process down. Take a few minutes each day and write down whatever comes to mind. And for more information on that, listen to last week's podcast episode for more information on why to do this and how to do this, okay.

But today, we're going to move onto step two. So, once you've spent a few weeks capturing those thoughts that rise up to your awareness – and it's just a fraction of all the thoughts your brain pops out at you on any given day – you may find that you don't actually like some of the thoughts you're thinking. You are not going to like all of those thoughts.

Perhaps they either don't feel good to you or they just don't really serve you any real purpose. They might be causing you to act in ways that you don't want to be acting. For example, if you, let's say, have a thought, "I want to have an open-door policy. I want everyone to have access to me at all times..." a lot of us principals, especially when we're new, we think we should be available 24/7.

But every time you actually get interrupted because you're trying to get other work done, you feel frustrated and the real thought that comes to the surface is, "I don't want to be interrupted, or I shouldn't be interrupted or

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

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

disturbed while I'm trying to get my work done..." is going to cause you to feel some irritation.

And in that response to that irritation, you might snap at the next person who walks in your door, right? And believe me, how many times does a principal hear, "Have you got a minute?" Just that sentence alone can create fury in a principal when they have a project they're trying to get done.

So, just notice that we have thoughts that we think we want to think, and then we have thoughts that we really think and the feeling and the reaction that we exhibit is from the real thoughts that are coming to the surface in that moment. So, that reaction, however, can create some unintentional results for you, such as instead of people coming to your door when you said they could, they're not a little skeptical, so they're hesitant to tell you anything, or they try and catch you in the hallway.

You know, you get 10 people grabbing you to the side trying to tell you everything, and you don't want that, because you can't remember everything from point A to point B. You want an open-door policy, but at the same time, it bothers you, so then you're getting these unintended results.

So, when you notice that you're having thoughts that don't feel good or they don't produce the results you want, the next step after writing down all of your brain drain is to run two STEAR Cycles; one on the subconscious thoughts you're thinking, and the other on the conscious thoughts you're thinking. And the idea behind this is for your brain to see how different thoughts create different results.

So, what you'll do is, after the brain dump, you're going to look through that list, take one of the thoughts that feels negative for you, and run a STEAR Cycle on it to see what results you're getting in the form of emotions, actions, and results.

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

So, there are two kinds of thoughts we have. There are the subconscious thoughts and conscious thoughts. A subconscious thought are the thoughts that run through our brain with little to no awareness on our behalf, like they're just running in the background.

Out of all those thoughts, your brain chooses to believe some of them regardless of our level of awareness. So they're running in the background. You're not even aware that you're believing in them. And that's what I tried to explain, that whole, I want this open-door policy but I'm also really irritated when people bother me. So those are subconscious thoughts running in the background.

Conscious thoughts, on the contrary, are thoughts that you intentionally choose to believe. You create them with your mind, you choose to believe them because of the way that they make you feel, act, and achieve. You're going to intentionally choose and be conscious of a thought even if it doesn't vibrate and resonate in the body as true quite yet. You're going to actively practice choosing to believe that conscious thought and bringing it to your awareness over and over again until it becomes a subconscious thought because it's working for you.

So, let's go back to the example of the open-door policy. The situation is your open-door policy. The thought that comes up in the moment is unintentionally, or subconsciously, is that people shouldn't interrupt or disturb me. And when you're thinking that and it happens, there's dissonance there. You start to feel irritated and frustrated, so your actions might be, like, you sigh when they walk in or you have some facial expressions without realizing it, rolling your eyes, or you snap at them. And that unintended result of those may be people are afraid to approach you or they start catching you at inopportune times.

When you believe the thought that people shouldn't be interrupting you and they are, this might be how it plays out. So, you have to decide whether or

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

not you like the way that feels and whether you want that result that that thought is creating. If not, if you don't like what's happening in that cycle, you can decide to choose another thought that feels better to you.

Now, there is no right thought to think. You can't perfectly know what exact thought is going to get you the exact result. You just have to ask yourself how you want to think and feel, and you'll come up with a list of thoughts. So, when you do this, ask yourself how you want to think and feel. Your brain may resist this idea of trying on a new thought, because really, it likes status quo.

It just wants to do what it's doing. It doesn't want you to challenge it. And even when you're not getting positive emotions or you're not getting the results you want, it will push back. So if this happens, I tell my brain this – and you can try this on; let's just try the new thought and see how it feels. If we don't end up liking it, we can always go back to the old thought. Not a problem.

It's just like going and trying on a new pair of shoes. You're going to try them on. You're going to try on several pairs. You're going to walk around a little bit in each of the pairs. If they hurt your feet or they're pinching, you don't have to buy them, you just go onto another pair, right? But when you find that pair that's really comfortable, you're going to be so glad that you took the time to try on all the shoes to find the one that fits and feels great; same with thoughts.

So, write down a list of thoughts you would rather be thinking or that feel better to you, and then put one of them in the STEAR Cycle, on the T-line. So, same situation, you've got this open-door policy. Perhaps you come up with a thought that says, "I want to be approachable and know what is happening on my campus." Pretty cool, right?

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

It feels a little more open, it feels a little more patient, it feels a lot more curious. You want to understand what's going on so that you can address it. So your actions might include welcoming all the people, listening to their concerns, following up as needed. And then what's happening is that people are stopping by, they're telling you all the things, they feel comfortable talking with you, they feel safe to approach you. And that might be awesome.

Now, let me tell you, you are not going to know the results of your new thinking right away. You can anticipate what might happen when you think, feel, or act this way. And I want you to do that. I want you to anticipate ahead of time what result might occur if you think, feel, and act this new way.

Because you want your brain to be like, "Okay, I see the benefit of trying on this new thought..." so you can anticipate what might happen when you think, feel, and act that way, but the actual results you get, you don't get to control those because those are outside of your sphere of control. Your results are also situations. Those results are going to be feedback to you as to whether that thought you were choosing to try on and think is working for you or not.

You might get the result you anticipate, or something else may come of it. You don't know that, but you can anticipate what you want to have happen and that helps you adjust the thought and the action item, right?

So, if something else does come of it – let's say you try this thought on, "I want to be approachable and know what's happening on campus..." and you're open and patient and curious and you're welcoming to people, it might work beautifully for you, or what might happen is that you're getting a different result than maybe you anticipated.

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

So, let's say in this case, the thought that you want to be approachable and know what's happening results in you getting completely bombarded with people wanting to come in and chat just for the sake of chatting. And you certainly know what's going on on campus, and people certainly feel safe and you're easy to approach, but it isn't serving you in the best way. You're not able to schedule time to get your own work done. People are coming up to you all the time. They're telling you things that now you feel like you have to address when you really don't need to address them or want to address them.

So you might decide that you don't actually need to know quite everything that is happening on campus, and you might adjust the thought to this; I'm going to be available for situations requiring my personal attention. Now, this thought's going to evoke a different emotion out of you.

And for me, when I think of this, it feels more like protective of my time, it feels a little more intentional with my schedule, and the way you feel slightly shifts and you feel differently, just enough to impact your approach. You might choose to have a smaller window of drop-in time, or you might create a process for communication that starts with your school secretary filtering the input that's coming in, and then she can update you on what she believes you need to actually know and manage.

It just depends on how it feels to you and is it what you want? So, the outcome that you want is always available to you if you are willing to continue trying on new thoughts and adjusting your approach until you get the result that you want.

So, practicing the awareness and choosing conscious thoughts are going to help you produce the emotions and the results that you want. This requires patience as your results are not going to change overnight. But, in time, your brain is going to see the power in this work and it will start to generate evidence that this process works for you.

Ep #59: Self-Coaching Part 2

So, this is step-two of the self-coaching process. Number one, you're just going to generate awareness about your thoughts. Number two, you're going to practice looking at your subconscious thoughts versus your conscious thoughts and you're going to practice inputting new thoughts and trying them on until you can get a result you want and create evidence for your brain that the process works.

Okay, my friends. Have an amazing week. I just want to also remind you, if you have not yet signed up for my weekly emails, be sure to do that because I send out tons of bonus information and worksheets, tips, and strategies, to help you grow deeper as a school leader, get more empowered, and I want to be able to help you in any way I can.

So jump on our weekly emails. Get the free bonus information. I send out content that applies to the podcast so you can dive deeper into that work. I just like to give you guys all kinds of fun gifts. So, be sure to check out and sign up for the emails at angelakellycoaching.com and get you as empowered as possible. Alright, my friends, have an amazing week. I'm going to talk to you guys next week. Take care, bye-bye.

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 where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.