

## Ep #100: Effective Leadership Hacks with Daniel Bauer



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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Hello, Empowered Principals, welcome to episode 100.

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.

Hello, my empowered leaders. How are you? It is the 100<sup>th</sup> episode of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*, and I don't know if you can believe it, but I'm having a hard time believing it. I am tripping out actually. I can't believe what a journey this has been.

This podcast is so meaningful to me and I love it for so many reasons, but one of my favorite reasons is that I get to support amazing people like you, and in doing so, I've been able and had the privilege of meeting amazing people who are doing the same thing that I am doing. We have similar missions and we're out here trying to support our school leaders so that we can improve, for staff and students, the experience that is education.

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Angela: And so to celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> episode of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*, I have a very, very special guest with us today. A school leader he is, and a ruckus-maker, and the host of Better Leaders, Better Schools, I proudly welcome Mr. Daniel Bauer. Daniel, welcome to the podcast. It's such an honor to have you here.

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Daniel: Hey, Angela. Thank you so much for having me on the show and congrats on 100 episodes. That is amazing; 100. That's quite an accomplishment.

Angela: Thank you so much. It's been close to two years. I think the first podcast launched in January of '18, so here we are towards the end of '19. I just think back to those first few podcasts when it was such a struggle and I wasn't sure what to say or how to say it. You know, you're recording it for hours on end and rerecording and rerecording and now it's one of the best things I do. It's my favorite time of day. So I've come a long way. I've grown a lot from the podcast, so I love it.

Daniel: Yeah, and that's something for the leader listening, whether it's a podcast, a vlog, a blog, the practice of putting yourself out there and consistently showing up is such a generous gift, not only to the world – because people will learn from what you're putting out there, but it's a gift to yourself. You really get clarity on your voice, what your superpowers are, and it's just an incredible reflective tool as well. So thank you, Angela, for sharing that, how you've grown a bit, putting out 100 episodes, and I hope you listeners maybe do something just like you.

Angela: I hope so too. You know what's funny is that the podcast is really where people have found my work. And just the other day, I was talking to a new client of mine and he said he had been so miserable, just consumed by all of the work that he wants to accomplish in his job that his wife started seeking out podcasts, some kind of support for him, and was able to run across this podcast. And he said, "Just by listening to the podcast, I could start to feel better. I felt like somebody understood me and understood the work that is required of us and why we get weighed down with all of the tasks at hand.

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So, Daniel, what you're doing in supporting people, empowering them to level up and be the next best version of themselves as school leaders, it's really work that is necessary in the world. And it's touching many lives, so thank you so much for what you're doing and for reaching out. I'm so honored that you did that. So why don't you tell the listeners a little bit about yourself, who you are, who you help, and what really got you into supporting school leaders in this capacity?

Daniel: I'm going to bring you to Chicago, Illinois, and it's a crisp fall day. You're probably wearing flannel and jeans, maybe even a nice knit cap to keep your head warm. And you find yourself at the Global Leadership Summit. What a name for a conference. And the leader of that summit says a quote that changes everything.

He said, "Everybody wins when a leader gets better." And that was me, when I heard that quote, I felt the weight and responsibility and I considered, how am I getting better? I'm at this conference and sure, I go to conferences, I read books, but at the time, I'm working in the third largest school district in the nation, Chicago public schools.

And to tell you the truth, as an assistant principal, believe it or not, leadership development really didn't exist. So, my options were, at the metaphorical fork in the road, I could throw myself a pity party and win the Oscar of the assistant principal who had it the worst, or I could take ownership over my development.

And I started to have conversations with people with incredible experience, people much smarter than me, and I wanted to learn from their successes and failures. And so like you, I started a podcast. I learned a lot. And I thought, if I took just action on one idea from every podcast, I would grow. And I did. And so I was able to move into a principal position. The podcast

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continued to grow. I started to support school leaders. They were writing in. I didn't even see this happening, Angela.

As the podcast grew, people would say, "What do you think about this situation? What would you do?" So we turned that into a formal leadership community basically saying, "Hey, what if we met every week and we talked about this stuff? Would you find value in that?" And people said yes.

And so, I'm a school principal. I'm doing this on the side. It's not interfering with work. I'm doing it one night a week, you know, at like 7:30 at night. And my wife wanted to research epidemiology across the pond, and so we moved to Belgium and I said, "Listen, give me a year to be successful. I can always go back and lead a school, but I don't want to end up at my funeral saying I wonder what would have happened if I'd pursued Better Leaders Better Schools fulltime.

So now, I've been doing this two years fulltime. The community that went from seven to 20 to 60 school leaders from six different countries around the world, and that's what I do. I help leaders level up through the podcast for free, the blog, and then if people want to be more intentional, I work with them in our leadership community or one on one.

Angela: Fabulous. I have a similar story, as my listeners know, but first of all I wrote the book before the podcast and I just felt a real calling to get something out into the world because, when I was a principal, I felt so isolated. I really thought that I was in it alone and my fellow colleague, Tyler and I, we would talk about this same thing, like there's no professional development, what happens?

When you're a teacher, you have all kinds of opportunities to develop professionally and hone your skills, and then you get into this leadership

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role and it's kind of like, "Figure it out." So I wrote the book, but in order to get that book into people's hands, I needed a venue in which to have conversations, and that was the podcast. So I'm doing very similar types of work where I'm working one on one with clients and now I've been asked to start developing a more, like, broad scale professional development force; entire sites and entire districts.

So that is kind of what's on the horizon for me, but I'm so grateful to know that I'm not alone in this. My author coach said, "You are really a pioneer," and I thought, "There's got to be someone else out there doing this." Like you were mentioning that you're bringing these people together, that your superpower is connecting people, which I completely agree. And I'm curious to hear what the most common problem you see when helping you clients. Like, what is it they bring up that makes the job feel so challenging?

Daniel: Such a great question. And everybody's always very interested in how, like how do I do this or that, whatever challenge that they're facing? And that's important to figure out. But I think, you know, what's going on underneath of all of that is just a question, you know, do I have what it takes, honestly.

We all suffer from the lizard brain, the imposter syndrome, some people call it the shadow, whatever, the crow, and there's an inner critic that exists in all our minds. And if we listen to that too often, if the volume on his or her voice gets too loud, that causes some major problems in our performance. And so I think, to me, that's at the root of it all; am I enough? Can I trust myself? Is this the right decision?

And then the symptoms are, how do I deal with this tough conversation? What do I do for student achievement? How do I align the community to

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this inspiring vision? But at the root is, like, am I enough? Can I trust myself?

Angela: Absolutely, and one of the ways that that manifests itself in the clients that I work with is there's not enough time. They don't feel competent enough because they feel there's too much to do and not enough time. And this scarcity mindset around time has been a real problem for people in the sense that they don't think they have enough time and they think the answer to that time is working more, so the action they're taking is working longer, harder, faster, right?

Daniel: No, don't do that. That's the worst thing to do.

Angela: Exactly, so what do you share with your clients about this whole concept around time and doing it all, being enough, getting it all done, and really measuring yourself based on your accomplishments as it relates to time?

Daniel: Time, that's such an important part of it. I'm glad you brought that up. And I think about that as the most important resource you have. You can figure out how to make more money. You can figure out how to get the computers or whatever resources for the building, like everything you can figure out, get a high-quality staff. They're challenging, but you can figure it out.

The one thing you can't ever replenish, and it's very difficult to figure out, is what to do with time. It's a finite resource and the thing is, when it's gone, it's gone. And so that is one of the biggest challenges leaders face. I think they find themselves in the hamster wheel, or remember that gopher game you used to play, like the whack-a-mole, or that you're just a ping-pong ball

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getting slammed around, like a pinball. That's what a school leader feels like every single day. And they're responding to these fires.

The problem is that they're reactive versus proactive. And again, I think at the root of that then is just a lack of intentionality, predetermining what constitutes an emergency or a fire, having the strength and the courage to say no and how people might respond. Because if we're honest, Angela, if you email me or call me late at night and you needed help, it feels good to help you. And I get something out of that, but I don't know that it's in my best interest. You have to have some boundaries as well. So that time piece is absolutely important.

Angela: Agreed. And I do a monthly theme to help my listeners and so we're ending out the month of November here with time management and I talk a lot about the mindset around the scarcity mindset versus that abundant mindset that there is enough time.

We also get into the nitty-gritty of the prioritization of our tasks, like you mentioned, being able to say no, and really knowing ahead of time before you start that day what is the priority, what is the intention, and keeping mindful of that throughout your day, so when interruptions happen, and they will because that is part of the job itself, planning for those, expecting them to happen and not over-scheduling yourself to the point where you feel the need to answer yes to everything and to stay up until something is, quote en quote, done, which we know the job is never done.

So I'm curious to know what your ideas are. Like when people get overwhelmed and are feeling like, you know, I've got to get people inspired into action, they need to follow the vision, there's so many things on the plate that feel like a priority, it's easy for principals to feel like they've kind of fallen off the wagon, so to speak. So what do you do to help your



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listeners and your clients get back on track and really get their focus and their energy and their alignment back with the position?

Daniel: I'm going to get to back on track in just a second. First, I want to say that if you feel you're out of time, there's a very real reason for that. The Center for Creative Leadership studied like 500 smart phone enabled executives and what they've found is that the average executive, so school principal, with a smart phone, iPad, whatever, smart device, they're connected to work 72 hours a week.

So there's 168 hours in the week, going back to the finite amount of time. That's the same for Angela, for me, for the listener. It doesn't change. If you're connected 72 hours a week, that leaves you 96. That still seems like a lot of time. But now, if you take the basics out; sleeping, grooming, and eating. And going super conservative, eight hours per day – you should be sleeping eight hours per day, plus eating, plus grooming, but let's go conservative. Eight times seven, 56. So of 96 minus 56, you're left with 40 hours; 40 hours for everything else, everything you love, like reading, going to the gym, or yoga, meditation, if you have a spiritual practice, whatever, plus fitness, time with friends, time with family, and then things you hate, like me, cleaning, chores, bills, you know.

Yeah, only 40 hours for all of that. And the point is that you are an executive that's connected to your smart phone and that puts you into actually some dangerous zones physiologically. I won't go into all that. But the point I wanted to share right there is that if you feel like you don't have enough time, it's because you don't.

And so one of the ways to be more intentional with your time is to disconnect. You probably didn't see maybe that tip coming, but disconnect from work. It's really, really hard. And it feels good to answer and you feel

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like you are going to get ahead, but let's be honest, look in the mirror, do a reflection in your journal; did you ever really get ahead by working a little bit later? No.

The work is always there. The school will always take. So you've got to have boundaries. So unplug. And the easiest way to unplug, keep your phone on silent, turn your notifications off. That would be my number one tip. So do that. If you want another level, take off social media from your phone because you're just mindlessly connecting and you just need to limit your inputs.

And if you want to go a step further – this is for the most courageous, and you need to get this clear with your superintendent as well because some of them aren't going to be onboard with this. The great ones will be. Take email off your phone. And then, if you're building something like an ideal week or something, just be very cognizant of when you are going to check email, and block that time off.

So you give yourself permission to crush email for 30 minutes in the morning, at lunch, and after school, and you'll be amazed, Angela, how much you can get done by putting those boundaries around that stuff. And that's really helpful.

Angela: Exactly, and just last week's episode, I spoke to the power of scheduling in time for power thinking and putting boundaries and limits around the time because I believe – and I've seen this, I've seen it with the podcast, when I first started this podcast, I would give myself hours upon hours, days upon days to write it, refine it, record it, rerecord it, and it was just consuming my life.

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And as my clientele grew and as, you know, I had other obligations coming along in the job, I didn't have the luxury of giving it so much time. And it will take as much time as you give it. So when you're doing a task, it's really important to set some boundaries around it. I'm going to give this two hours – it's like a test. It's a time test.

Two hours worth of work for those emails a day and you can split it up 30 to 45 minutes at a time, and that's it. And even that is a lot of time for email. I would recommend like 30 in the morning, 30 in the afternoon, call it a day. Have your secretary help. There are so many strategies. And letting go – and when you dig down deeper, the art of letting go, the art of disconnecting, like you said – I was thinking, my listeners are probably going, this man is crazy, I am not letting go of my email and my phone.

But do it. Just, I dare you. And to be honest, I feel like the entire mindset around time is that we have to unlearn everything we believe to be true about time, and this whole idea of more equals better and more equals more is the flip. We can do so much more in less time when we do the strategies that you just suggested.

Daniel: You know, I worked with one school leader, Jessica Cabeen, you may have heard of her, she's written a number of books. She's just absolutely fantastic. She did this and she was the Minnesota principal of the year. So you can be incredibly effective and not have email on your phone.

Angela: I know this is blowing people's minds right now. I'm sure of it. I'm sure of it. I think that the other reason people attach to the need to keep working and keep working is because there's a belief out there that if I don't, if I take email off my phone, if I stop responding after 6pm, that I'm not doing my job or that I'm not taking it seriously. There's something with

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that whole mindset of I'm not a good leader if I'm not available, if I'm not present all the time. So where's that balance and what conversations have come up with your clients around that?

Daniel: So one, test that idea to see if it's true. There are toxic cultures that you have to be always on and always working to at least exist. I don't know that you're being effective because you're draining your energy, and if you run in the red too long, if you're a car, you break your engine. So you're going to break.

That doesn't sound like a fun culture to exist in, so I would challenge the listener, like, why are you working there? There's other districts that exist that aren't like that. There's workplace bias. So the women have it harder than the men and people are looking at them and seeing if they are, like, quote en quote, tough enough or can be as productive or whatever. And so they're trying to overcompensate for that and overcome that bias, but necessarily working harder isn't always the best approach.

It's about creating the most value, you know. And then if we're really honest too, some of us are just addicted and we get our identity too much from work, you know. And that's true for me. It's really hard for me to unplug and to stop, and so it's something that I battle with and I think about all the time. But when I'm my healthiest, I am able to do that. So it's a struggle. It's not easy.

And the way that I'm able to do it is by having accountability partners, you know, people that will check me, you know, a coach that will get in my face or ask those reflective questions if I'm disconnecting and that kind of stuff. So I think that's a bit about what's going on there with the work. I started riffing on that, so I don't think I even addressed your question.

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Angela: you actually did address the question because it feels counterintuitive to stop and to work less, but that is why it is important to have somebody, like you said, an accountability partner or a coach, who can lovingly remind you that you are your most important asset. Yes, time is important, money is important, but an even more important asset than those two is your brain. And if your brain isn't rested and fulfilled with exercise and love and fun and doing the things that it enjoys to do, then you are not going to be at your best in terms of leadership.

Daniel: Right, and you can study – I challenge the listener, go out, go look for some leaders. You'll find this. Elite performers in sports, they sleep like all the time. Somebody like Winston Churchill, one of the best things he learned traveling around the world was how to take a siesta and take a nap.

The body will shut down and your mind, if you stay up for too long and you don't get rest and you're always connected to work, it's just like being drunk, so you might as well start drinking at work, you know. Of course, I'm being tongue in cheek there, but honestly, physiologically, if you are constantly on and you're not getting rest, you might as well literally be drunk.

I took this course because 2019, for me, is the year of leveling up and I did the altMBA, which was the best thing I did, took a course on exponential coaching, and I took this other one on finding mastery. And the interesting idea there is I knew I would find stuff about vision, I knew I was going to find stuff about culture. We created our personal philosophy and mine is to create like an artist, like a poet, smile and breathe. And that's a very meaningful thing that not only makes sense in my head but connects with my heart.

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But what I didn't expect to learn a lot about, so much of the course was devoted to, how do we rest and replenish energy? Because these guys, this was Dr. Michael Gervais, he's a sports psychologist, and coached Pete Carroll, Seahawks, and they've won Super Bowls. These guys work with the best of the best, Olympians, NFL players, high-level executives.

And what helps them be highly effective is that they rest, that they take time away. They have hobbies, that they unplug. It does seem counterintuitive, but again, using the car metaphor, run it to the ground like all the time, don't get the oil changed and keep it in the red, see what happens. I guarantee it will break down.

Angela: Exactly. And so my listeners out there, I beg you to consider unplugging and resting, as Daniel was just suggesting because although it feels counterintuitive – and I can tell you, I did it. I ran myself ragged. I went into work where I was so exhausted, I could not make decisions. I could not lead from a place of clarity, and that does not make a good school great, I will tell you that.

It really is imperative that we start being the model of what it means to take care of ourselves, what it means to be time effective in the sense that, when we're at work, we're at work. When we're at home, we're at home, and when we're resting, we're resting, and being very present in all of our needs, not just in our professional and our leadership needs of the school. So, Daniel, any last thoughts, tips, suggestions for staying organized and managing the busyness that comes with the school year?

Daniel: Ryan Holiday says in order to think clearly, it's essential that each of us figures out how to filter out the inconsequential from the essential. So part of that is just really understanding what is important and what's urgent. And important is obviously more important. Going a level above that is

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what's going to be significant. So not even what's urgent, the fire, or what's important, which will create value, but what's going to stand the test of time? What are those things that are significant?

And that's where elite performers play. There's a difference between shallow work and deep work. Shallow work allows you to keep your job. Dealing with fires, answering emails, most paperwork, that kind of stuff just allows you to keep the job, but you don't win. And if you want to win, you have to identify, what is significant, what's going to create the most value, what is deep work?

And so I would challenge the listener to find 60 minutes to 90 minutes once a week to just work on significant stuff. Maybe that is creating a meaningful vision for your school. Maybe it's about identifying sticky core values. Whatever it is, you know those things, Angela, everybody has something that they're like, "I wish I had time for that."

Get to it. Put 60 to 90 minutes just once a week and work on that thing you wish you always could get to because it inspires you, it gives you passion, right? It fulfills you and you know that it's exactly what your school needs. Do that and you'll get everything else figured out.

And the last tip would be this; identify what's good enough. You know, most of us got to those high-level positions because we work really hard. Hard work only gets you so far. It gets you to that top level, but again, it doesn't help you win. And so if you can identify good enough for all the shallow work stuff and just say, you know what, I might get a C, if somebody was evaluating this, I might get a C. Maybe I'll even get a D, but it's done. That's okay because the other things that are really going to move the needle, that's where you've got to give all your focus and all your energy.

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Angela: I love that so much. It's really about doing the important versus the urgent. There are things that do need to be taken care of, but if you cut your tasks into four quadrants, there's urgent unimportant, that's the phone ringing or social media calling your name. But it's not important and it's really not urgent even though it feels like it.

Then you get over to urgent and important, urgent non-important, and I think what happens is that non-urgent, highly important quadrant, that is where our heart is, our passions are, and we don't dive into that quadrant enough. So being intentional and scheduling it in your day and in your week gives you something to look forward to and it revives the why behind the work that we do.

Daniel: Exactly. And, Angela, if it's okay, I have a gift for your listeners. And if they go to [betterleadersbetterschools.com/empower](https://betterleadersbetterschools.com/empower), I'm going to give away a course. Normally I do this live face-to-face coaching and we build an ideal week together. But all the questions, the template, the structure of how to build an ideal week and to get intentional with your time, I'd love to give that away for free. So you'll get the videos. You'll get the template, and it will help you level up instantly.

Angela: That is fabulous. Thank you so much. Listeners, did you hear that? If you want to learn more about time management and how to reframe the way you think about time, check out Daniel's free program at – where can they go to find this again?

Daniel: Yeah, [betterleadersbetterschools.com/empower](https://betterleadersbetterschools.com/empower).

Angela: Wow, awesome. Daniel, I cannot thank you enough for your time today. And in the honor of efficiency, I bid you farewell and I think you so



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much for being here today and I look forward to collaborating with you in the future.

Daniel: Alright, thanks so much for having me on the show and congrats again for episode 100.

Angela: Yes, happy to have you here. Thanks again. Have a great rest of your week, guys, we'll talk to you next week. Take care, bye-bye.

Hey there, my fellow educator. Are you yearning to go a little further with these concepts and learn how to apply them in your everyday work situations? Do you want to feel understood and more connected with likeminded school leaders? If so, I'm super excited to offer you, for the very first time ever, the Empowered Principal Mastermind.

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