

Ep #104: 2020 Vision



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals, welcome to episode 104.

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 good friends and my empowered leaders. How are you doing? Happy Tuesday. Here we are at the end of 2019, and at the end of another entire decade. Doesn't that just blow your mind? I'm always amazed at how quickly the end of the year seems to creep up.

At the beginning of each year, I think about how much time I have to create new habits and routines, learn some new skills, and accomplish my year's goals. Then, when December rolls around, my brain is like, what happened to the year? Where did the time go? Do you guys experience that, too? Ah.

So, here we are at the end of 2019. This is the time of year that we get to feel excited for fresh starts and new resolutions. And we also feel the burn of disappointment in the goals that we didn't reach, and the things that we didn't experience or accomplish.

Most people don't want to take the time to review the past year because, well number one, they think it will take too much time, which means they don't think it will be a valuable use of their time. And two, they don't want to feel the emotion that comes with not honoring and reaching the goals they set at the beginning of the year.

It doesn't feel good to fail. So, we avoid reflecting on our past year, in an effort to avoid the negative feelings that come with failing. And I find this somewhat funny, including myself. I totally laugh at myself on this. Because

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ignoring the fail doesn't mean that the failure didn't happen. It just means that we weren't willing to experience the negative emotion of failure. It doesn't change the results at all.

So, I've had to spend a great deal of time working on this in my business. Ignoring my business stats, and numbers, and budgets, it doesn't change the stats and the number of clients I've served, or how much I've spent on my business. It doesn't change any of that. Not reflecting on my goals, and my achievements, and my fails it only stunts my progress and growth as a coach and as a business owner.

And the same is true for you, being in school leadership. When you don't reflect on your goals, or your progress, or your fails, or the stats that we use to measure our growth, you're going to stagnate as a leader. And this is when it feels like we're in a spin cycle of no growth, and confusion, and frustration, and no real change.

I think the cool thing about working at a school is that you get to experience two new years, and two end of years. Because you have the start of a new school year, which feels like the start of a new calendar year. It's exciting. It's energetic. There's a lot of anticipation and motivation and eagerness to accomplishing all of the things you want to accomplish.

And then, you also have the start of the new calendar year, which feels like another new start, but it's in the middle of your school year. So, it ends up being like a midyear check-in and reset. You can use the momentum of the end and start of a calendar year to reflect and boost yourself for the second half of the school year.

It's so invigorating, and rejuvenating, and exciting when we are going through, like, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and we think about all of the fresh starts and new chances that we get, to reimagine our self and who we will be as people and as leaders. And it's fun to have this midyear

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opportunity as a school leader, to give yourself time for reflection and rejuvenation.

Now, I can see why people are discouraged about the whole goal-setting thing, when we listen to the stats that are in all of the news and media. You know, 45% of adult Americans make at least one resolution. That's less than half of people even consider making a resolution for the New Year. And, 80% of the people who make the resolution, they drop their commitment within six weeks of having made it.

That doesn't give your goal much of a chance, or a lot of time, to be accomplished, right? And get this. Only 8% of the people who create a resolution actually achieve it. So, with success rates in the single digits, it's understandable why the thought of goal setting is pretty disheartening from the start. We feel like we've already failed before we've decided what our resolution is going to be, so why even try?

But, I ask you this. What if our goal-setting failures haven't exactly been our fault? Think about this. When we were kids, we were never really taught how to set goals. And not just how to set them, how to commit to them long enough to achieve them. How to overcome the obstacles that we face when we set a big goal for ourselves. How to really understand what it means to commit to a goal.

You know, when I think back to being a kid, we're pretty much surrounded and bombarded by other people's goals for us. We have our parents who set goals for us, or our teachers who set goals for us. But we're not taught the skill of setting goals for ourselves. Or, might I add, how to navigate the emotions and the actions that are required to accomplish the goals.

Instead, we're taught how to seek the approval of our teachers or our parents, based on the goals that they've set for us. And because we didn't have that internal buy-in or understanding of what the goal was, and why

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we were accomplishing it, and what it was going to mean for us, we don't fully commit to the work that it takes, and to the emotions we have to be willing to experience, in order to achieve big accomplishments. That's just not a part of our current school experience.

So, my goal is to help educators see the value in learning this skill for ourselves, and then teaching it to our students so that they can learn how to set and plan goals. And, to commit to them to the level to which it takes to achieve them.

Before we get into talking about how to set goals that work, let's first talk about our mindset around goal setting. The idea of a goal should be to excite you and motivate you into taking action. The goal of goal setting is to create strong energy and emotion around the goal, so that you don't just sit around thinking about the goal. Your brain gets to work on coming up with new ideas, and trying all kinds of ways to accomplish the goal.

The goal is meant to generate positive emotion, so that you want to act on it and work towards it. If you want to enjoy the idea of not only accomplishing the goal, but the process of figuring out how to accomplish the goal, that's really the goal. You'll know that a goal is fun for you when you feel that tinkle of excitement inside when you're dreaming about it.

Even if your brain is freaking out a little bit, and you've set a goal that's really, really big and you're like, "Oh my God." Your brain's going to be like, "But how? But how?" If you set a goal and then you think negatively about it, you're basically admitting defeat before you even start. And you're never going to work towards a goal that doesn't feel like any kind of fun.

So, you want your goal to feel fun and amazing before you've achieved it. You want to understand why you want to achieve the goal, and what is going to change as a result of having achieved it. And knowing this will help

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your mind stay motivated when the obstacles arise. Because we know that they will, right?

And here's the thing, we already know ahead of time that obstacles are going to come up. If there were no obstacles, there would be no problem in achieving every goal you set. You'd have everything just the way you want it.

You'd be at your ideal weight, you'd have the ideal relationships and family, you'd be the leader of the school that you want. You'd have the influence and impact on the school. You would have the scores you want. You would be able to inspire your teachers into doing everything perfectly. And everything would just feel easy.

But that's not really how goals work. They're meant to be hard. We set goals because the journey to accomplishing them is hard work and challenging. And it feels amazing to overcome those challenges, and do the hard work, and be proud of ourselves. So, goals have to be fun, but they also have to be hard.

And in fact, your goal should kind of warp your brain a little bit. Your brain should be thinking like, "Wait a minute. How do I do this?" And it gets all confused and it gets flustered. And it thinks to you, "That's a crazy goal. Girl, why are you setting that goal so high?" Your brain's going to tell you it has no idea how to do this.

You want some of that dissonance going on in your brain. Being challenged is a part of the fun, right? We love to problem solve and figure things out as humans. That's why we like to do puzzles and play games, and watch suspenseful movies and shows.

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And think of the flip side of this. We've all set a goal that was a very low-hanging fruit, one that we knew we could accomplish pretty easily before we set it. But guys, it doesn't super light us up to do that. And it doesn't require that we put very much effort into accomplishing it.

And the downside of that is that when we do accomplish it, it doesn't feel that great. It's like meh, that's okay. Like, yeah, we did it. So what? And we don't get to feel that energy that comes from really accomplishing a goal that was hard for us to achieve.

We want to choose a goal that's exciting and that pushes us, so that we're motivated to do the hard work that it's going to take, and follow through on our commitments, and honor what we said we would do through that hard work, because we want to feel the satisfaction and accomplishment that comes when we actually meet the goal.

And let me say this. The hardest part of any goal will be the mindset work you have to do in order to become the person who achieves the goal. The actual obstacles are thoughts in your mind. What makes goals feel hard isn't the circumstances upon which you are in when you're making the goal, or when you're trying to accomplish the goal. What makes the goal feel hard is your thoughts about it.

So, for example, you know, the classic one is, like, getting into better shape. That's the number one resolution everybody makes. Be healthier. But why does it feel so hard to be healthier? It's because of our thoughts like, "Oh, it's so early. I just want to sleep in. My body's really sore. It hurts to lift weights. I can't do that. I can't get up every single day. It's just too hard." Right? We tell ourselves that.

The reason goals feel hard is because of our thoughts about the goals. The struggle is in our mind, it's not in our situation. So, why set goals at all?

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This all sounds just like a lot of hard work. Why not just let life happen to us as it comes? And here's why I believe we set goals.

We don't set goals just to have goals. We set goals because the process of achieving goals evolves us into the human who is capable of that goal. Every time we set a big goal for ourselves, that goal stretches our thinking. It's how we think about ourselves, how we solve problems, and how we face our fears. It molds us and shapes us into becoming a new version of ourselves.

Think back when you wanted to become a leader, but you were still teaching. Or, maybe you were an instructional coach, and you were seeing your principal lead the school, and you wanted to do that. You set that goal of becoming a school leader. And in order to reach that goal, you had to take tons of actions to get there. You had to set your mind to it, you had to be determined, you had to do things you didn't want to do. You had to get up and show up, even when it was hard.

And that series of actions, that series of commitments, little by little, day by day, is how you evolved from becoming a teacher, into becoming a person who's a school leader. And now that you're a school leader, you don't stop and really think about how awesome it was that you reached your goal. You probably celebrated it, back at that time. But now, it's just a matter of who you are. And what you gain by having that goal isn't the achievement of the goal itself, but who we become in the process.

I also believe that we set goals because of the way that we believe achieving them will make us feel. Like, think about going on vacation. You can think about going on vacation months in advance, before you're even going on vacation, and you can feel the excitement and energy of the anticipation of going on vacation. You get to feel the feelings of accomplishing vacation, before you've actually gone on vacation. It's pretty cool.

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So, think of something you'd love to have right now. Something that seems really out of reach. For example, let's say you've been really wanting to hire a full-time counselor to support your students' mental and emotional wellbeing. But, you don't seem to have the money for it, or the district's told you no, it's too much. Whatever the obstacle is, right?

Think of that goal. And then, think about why you want to have that goal. Why do you want to have that school counselor? When you think about having that school counselor, the feelings that come up for you are that you are doing your job as a school leader, in order to get the support that your children need. And when your children get the support they need, they're more available for learning and growing and evolving as students.

And that makes you feel amazing as a leader, because you are giving and serving your clients, basically your students, in a way that helps them grow and learn. And it makes you feel amazing. So, we set goals because we think about how it's going to make us feel. And even though it feels impossible, the idea and the thinking about the possibility of it being possible, is how we generate that emotion to drive us into action.

Accomplishing the goal isn't what makes you feel amazing. Accomplishing a goal after you've worked to figure it out is why you feel amazing. If somebody were to give you, like, the California Distinguished School Award, before you set foot into your role as principal, and just said, "Oh, you're an amazing principal. You accomplished this goal." It wouldn't feel amazing to you, because it felt like somebody just gave you the goal.

You hadn't earned the goal. Somebody else behind you earned the goal. It wasn't really you, it was the principal prior to you. And, you can feel good that your school accomplished that, but you, personally, are not going to be attached to that goal, to having achieved that goal.

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So, the reason that we feel amazing when we accomplish a goal is because we've earned it. We've worked for it. We pushed through the obstacles. We figured out solutions to the challenges, and we became the person who learned how to accomplish that goal on our own.

So, how do we set goals? I want to start by saying that there is a difference between having a goal and goal setting. Having a goal with no preparation is just a wish. You can dream about your goals all day long, and you can think about them in your brain. But without writing it down, and creating a plan to achieve it, and then committing to the work and continually revisiting the plan until you have accomplished it, means that you haven't created a path for your brain to focus on, and work towards achieving it.

There's too big of a gap between thinking about accomplishing something to actually accomplishing it. So, if you could just think about what you wanted and it would happen, you would already have accomplished it by now. There's too big of a gap. You have to show your brain a path that it goes from being impossible to possible.

And you want to think of, how might this be possible? What are the ways we could overcome obstacles? Why don't I have what I want now? Where do I want to be? Why do I want to be there? And how might I get there? And you keep trying and failing, and trying and failing, and trying and failing. And that path, although you don't know exactly what it is, the trial and error is the path to the success.

And the good news is that just by writing down a goal, and revisiting it regularly, can greatly increase your chances for success. This sounds very simple. But this is how highly successful people set goals. Of all the people who actually have a goal, only 4% of those people write the goal down on paper, 4%. That's crazy. And of the 4% of people who actually write down the goal, only 1% of those people regularly review them.

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I know that I've personally fallen off the wagon this year, from time to time, in reviewing my goals, I have them in my head, but I don't honor the commitment to them enough to sit down, spend 5 or 10 minutes looking at them, writing them, reviewing them, thinking about them. Planning out a path for the day, in terms of how I'm going to get closer to that goal.

But I do know this. I am very committed in my resolve to improve my practice of goal setting, and reviewing my goals. Because I firmly believe that it is the difference between having a good life and having an extraordinary life.

So, let's jump to you. What is your vision for next year? What's your vision for the next decade? What's your 2020 vision looking like, my friends? Where do you want to be by the end of this school year? Where do you want to be in one year from now? In 10 years from now?

The more impossible and unrealistic your goals are, the better. You want to allow yourself to go to the place where you tap into goals that you don't think you can actually achieve. You have to admit to yourself that you want something that feels too big, that feels too much, that feels too impossible.

Let yourself dream bigger than you have ever allowed yourself to admit before. Really go there. And then ask yourself why you want it. Get very specific and very clear. This is a very important step. Don't skip this step.

Oftentimes when we think we want something, we ask ourselves why we want it. And then what comes up is that we really don't know why we want it. Or, we don't have a reason that's extremely compelling, at least compelling enough to take action towards achieving it.

So, when we say we want to lose 10 pounds, but we don't want to really get up and go to the gym, or change the way we act right now, we're not

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very compelled. So we don't really know why we want it. Why do we want to lose 10 pounds? Oh, I don't know.

You have to know that you're committed to achieving it. So, on a scale of 1 to 10, if your commitment's not a 10, why not? And what would make it a 10? You have to be very specific and clear. You need compelling reasons to drive your actions to change.

And then, think about it this way. What will change as a result of achieving the goal? Why does achieving this goal matter in the long run? And knowing this will help you commit to the work that it takes in the short term. Our brains are wired to want instant and immediate gratification. They're going to want to be lazy. They're going to want to be the status quo. And we have to kind of override that instinct, and have that compelling reason, and understand what it means for us in the long term.

Also consider, what will stay the same? I think it's important to not over-glamorize, if that's a word, our goals. Because we believe, like, everything's going to be different if we just accomplished this one goal. If we just lose the 10 pounds, or we improve test scores, what about you and your life will actually stay the same?

Also consider what obstacles you anticipate. What do you think is going to come up as an obstacle or a block to achieving the goal? And why are these obstacles? And I'm going to tell you a secret. Your obstacles are your thoughts.

But, in your mind, it's going to be something outside of you that's going to come up. It's going to be, we don't have enough money. We don't have enough resources. We don't have enough time. Or, I'm exhausted, or there's too much to do. Or, you know, something's going to come up that you're going to perceive as being an obstacle that you can't overcome.

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I want you to think about, what do you anticipate being obstacles to your goals? Why are they obstacles? And how will you plan to overcome them? What supports do you have in place for yourself? And, what are you willing to invest to get the support you need?

I want you to remember this. No one has the ability to reach every goal of their own without support. This is why there are doctors and lawyers and coaches out in the world. People create careers, in order to help us achieve our goals.

We meet with a lawyer, an attorney, to help us plan our trust and our will, because we don't know how to do that legally. And that person wants to help us in getting our affairs in order. That's why they went into the business of becoming an attorney, to help people with their trust and wills. Doctors go into the business of helping people stay healthy and survive, because they want to help you achieve your goal of living.

Coaches are out in the world to help you achieve your goals. Be willing to invest in yourself. And the amount you're willing to invest in yourself, it will tell you directly how committed you are to reaching your goal. If you want to lose weight, but you're not willing to join a gym membership, pay a little bit more for healthier food, or hire a fitness trainer, then you aren't super willing to do what it takes in order to improve your fitness levels.

Another thing to consider is, how often do you plan to review and think about your goals? You need to schedule in time for goal setting, and setting those intentions and reviewing them. You want to set the intention, and you want to tell your goal, "Hey, I think you are valuable and important. You are a priority to me. And I'm going to give you my time and attention on a regular basis, because I believe that you are possible." You want to set that intention for your goal.

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And I want you to ask yourself, why haven't you already reached this goal in your life? And this question helps you to see what your current line of thinking is, so that you can identify the thoughts that are getting you the failed result. And, it will help you see how to work towards changing your thoughts, into thoughts that will get you the result that you want.

It's okay that you haven't reached the goal yet. That's totally normal. Every person has goals they have set and failed. And what you want to see is, what are you thinking right now that's getting you the result of not reaching the goal? And what would you have to think, or what is the person thinking who has that result already? What are they thinking? What are they feeling?

So, what are the thoughts you need to intentionally practice in order to be willing to reach your goal? And, how do you need to be thinking and feeling? You're going to experience a lot of failure, and how will you process that emotion? How will you also celebrate your achievement?

By the way, having a specific plan for celebrating and honoring the celebration of your accomplishment is just as important as knowing how you'll respond to failures. Let your future self trust that you're going to acknowledge and honor the hard work you put into accomplishing the goal. Because if there's no accomplishment, no achievement, no celebration, there's no motivation as to why you should do it, right?

And finally, you want to ask yourself, like, what happens as a result of not achieving this goal? You want your brain to see the pain points of failing at the goal. So it can see why the immediate grind of goal setting and working on the goals, and failing ahead of time, is going to be worth the long-term benefits.

What are the pain points as a result of failing at this goal? Why does failing become not an option? And why is now the time to work on this goal?

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What's the cost of waiting until the end of the school year, or next year, or five years from now? Why is now the time you should work on this goal?

You want to create momentum. And you want to understand the cost of not starting right now, on my goals today, is going to be X result. What's going to happen to me in one year, three years, five years? When I decide not to set goals, not to follow through with them, not to honor them, not to commit to them?

To me, you guys, setting goals is one of the most exciting things we can do for ourselves. It is what living is all about. Learning how to set goals, practice and believing in them, and working and failing our way towards our goals, and achieving them and celebrating them, is why we exist.

It is true that you can also choose to live passively, and let your life experience be a reaction to your circumstances. But I don't think that's why you went into education. I believe we went into education because we want to set goals. We want to fail at them. We want to achieve them. We want to work towards them. And we want to help other people learn how to do the same.

So, I invite you to consider working together with me to evolve the way you think and set goals for yourself as educators, so that we can empower the students that we have dedicated our life's work towards.

There is never a better time to start working on your goals than right now, today. Today, the decisions that you make right now, today, and that you commit to, today, are going to make the difference and the impact on your life, and your students, and your staff, and your goals a year from now, three years from now, five years from now.

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And you have no idea how amazing your life will be, if you only would start today. Think about that, chew on that. Have an amazing week, and I will talk with you guys 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.

It's a safe space where we can talk about the real issues that you face on a daily basis and support you in evolving your leadership and your life to the next level. For more information, simply go to angelakellycoaching.com and click on, "EP Mastermind." We start this January. I can't wait to see you on the inside.

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.