

Ep #121: (Part One) Moving Forward



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals. Welcome to Episode 121.

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 leaders. Happy Tuesday. If you're new to the podcast, welcome, welcome. I hope these podcasts throughout the month of April have been supportive and helpful in you finding your way and navigating through this crisis, this pandemic. Hopefully you have not caught the Coronavirus. If you have, may you be well. May you be healthy. May you take very excellent care of yourself and your loved ones.

So, I want to jump right in to keep these very short and very sweet so that you can process them, you can listen to them multiple times and you can share them with your colleagues. We want to get as many people feeling supported as possible.

So, last week, we talked about how school leadership will always be 50-50. Today, we're going to talk about how to start moving forward. We have been processing the shock and the panic and fears around this pandemic. Now we're getting into the how. We're trying to put some closure on that initial shock and pain and fear.

We're trying to wrap our heads around, okay, what triage do we do, what actions do we take, what can we take care of right now and what can we let go of? We're starting to try to figure out, how do we move ahead? How do we look forward? How do we go from here?

So, in the past couple of episodes, I've told you that you have less control than you think you should have, or that you want to have. And I've told you that life's going to be 50-50 no matter what and school leadership is 50-50 no matter what.

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So, I can imagine that your brain is thinking the question, what's the point? How can I get excited and motivated to lead my school and my community when I don't get to control things outside of me, I don't get to feel in control during this time of school leadership, and that regardless of what I do, I'm going to experience negative emotions 50% of the time.

And to your brain, I say this; that's a fabulous question. And I'm going to give it a solution, right now, right here, very directly.

Okay, things outside of your control feels like it's a thought. But really, it's a situation. It's the situation at its very essence. A situation is things outside of your control, things outside of you, things outside of your brain, your heart, your mind, your soul, things outside of your essence.

Not being able to control things outside of you is just a fact. It's a truth. We can prove it in a court of law. You cannot control other people. You cannot control Coronavirus. You cannot control decisions that politicians or your boss or the government is making. Those are out of our control.

This means that being out of control is completely neutral. It's just a situation that is true. Not being able to control things doesn't mean anything at all until our brain has a thought about it.

For those of you who are new to the podcast, I teach a tool that's based off the Life Coach School tool, the Model. I call it the STEAR Cycle. It's the same tool. I use it to highlight and show teachers and school leaders that our thoughts create our results. And we do that in a way that goes like this.

A situation occurs outside of us. The situation in this case is controlling things outside of us. It's not something we can do. We can prove that in a court of law. It's just a fact of life.

So, what do we think about that fact? Do we like it? Do we not? How do we want to think and feel about it? Whatever your brain deems to be true about the fact that we can't control everything around us is how you're going to feel. So, thoughts trigger emotions.

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When you believe that you should be able to control everything – and trust me, I would love to grant you that wish. I would love to grant me that wish. If I thought I could control other people and all of the things outside of me, this would be a whole other podcast.

But what's happening here is we don't have that control. We never will have that control. So, what do we make that mean? What do we make it mean about us? What do we make it mean about the world outside of us? What do we make it mean about other people? And that thought, whatever your brain chooses to believe, will trigger an emotion.

So, if you think you should be able to control, you're going to be frustrated. You're going to be banging your head. And the action you're going to take as a result of being frustrated is you're going to try over and over again in different ways. And you're going to bang your head against the wall and you're going to create more frustration and more lack of control by trying to control things you believe you should control but can't.

So, what do you think about not being able to control things? What do you think about it? What are your thoughts? Write them down. Be honest with yourself. Don't fake it and lie to yourself and say, "I don't think I should really have control." No. We're school leaders; we want total control and dominance of the world.

Here is what I've trained myself to think – and it's super-fun, so I'm going to share it with you. If you want to create excitement and motivation for yourself, what would you have to think about not having control over things? Really, what would you have to think?

Here's what I love to think. I love to think, "Thank goodness. One less thing on my plate. I don't have to control everything outside of me. What a relief. Now I can focus on the things that I do have control over."

And when I think about that, it gets me so ramped up and excited. I'm totally motivated when I'm like, "Goodness sakes, thank goodness I don't have to worry about things outside of my control." Take it off my plate, stop

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even thinking about it or worrying about it, and get busy doing the things I love to do and that I can control.

I'm totally jazzed up by that. I want to do things I have control over, which is so much more fun and invigorating than to try and pretend that I have control over things I don't and then being frustrated about it. Can you see that? Borrow my thoughts for a while if it helps.

And the same holds true for life being 50-50 and leadership being 50-50. This job that you're in right now is totally 50-50, no matter what the circumstance is. If you were a teacher, it would be a different 50-50, but it'd still be 50-50. And if you're pining to get out of school leadership or out of education altogether like I was and now you're into wanting to be an entrepreneur, you're wanting to become a coach, or you're wanting to become an educational consultant or go work for another company altogether, no matter what your aspirations are, I promise you, when you get to that place, it will be a different 50-50.

So, what do you think is true? When you consider the concept or the idea that life truly is 50-50, what thoughts do you have about it? Do you think it's true? Do you think it shouldn't be true? Do you think that it's absolutely not true?

It doesn't matter what you think, except that it does because whatever you believe to be true about control and about leadership and about yourself and about life being 50-50 is what's going to trigger your emotional state. And the way that you feel – and you can't deny the way that you feel. And it's going to highlight and open the truth to what you're thinking based on what you're feeling and doing.

So, the way you feel determines the decisions that you're going to make in school leadership and how you approach leading your school through this end of year. So, if you're spinning on the idea that it should be better than it is, that it should be different than it is, that you should have more control or more say than you have, you are going to be in negative emotion more of

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the time, which is going to impact the way you show up at school, the way you lead your community, and the decisions that you make, which will ultimately impact the result that you get at the end of the year.

But here is the good news. The way to begin moving forward through this year and leading your troops from an empowered state of mind is all within your control. Here are the three steps you can begin to take to move yourself and your community forward.

Number one, decisions. You will need to make decisions; decisions you never thought you'd have to make. You will need to make them quickly and without having all of the information that your brain tells you it needs before you make the decision.

You're going to have to make decisions based on the information you have right here right now. You make a decision very quickly. You have to be decisive. When you're wishy-washy you stall in indecision that does not serve you or the community. Decisions need to be made. You are the leader. That is your role. You are responsible for making decisions.

You need to communicate those decisions and support and follow through with your decisions. And then, you're going to have to manage the feedback and the outcomes that come out of those decisions, while in the same time making new decisions. So, you have to believe this. You have to practice believing.

There is no wrong decision. There is no right decision. There is only a decision. You make a decision with the information you have at the time. You decide, you communicate, you execute, you support others. When new information comes along, you make new decisions, or you adjust your decision, and you go through the process again. Decide, communicate, execute, support, evaluate, decide, rinse and repeat. No wrongs, no rights, just decisions.

Step two, with that being said, mistakes will be made. There's a difference between wrong and right and mistakes. And mistakes are just an opinion,

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to be honest with you. I use the word mistakes because, as new information comes in, in retrospect, you will look back and say, “I could have made a different decision,” or, “I should have made a different decision.” But that’s in retrospect. That is with new information.

You cannot make a decision in the past with information you don’t have until your present moment. So, you’re going to judge your past decisions as some of them being mistakes or that other people are making mistakes.

Beating yourself up for past decisions serves no purpose at all; zero. It takes your energy and focus away from the present moment. It breaks down your confidence and your decision to make decisions at all. You will freeze yourself.

When you spin in decision and when you believe that you’ve made a wrong decision or that you’ve made a mistake, it disempowers you. You will let the fear of making mistakes freeze your ability to make new decisions and to lead your people.

You have to be willing to allow the fear to be present, to make the decision anyway, to allow people to say it’s a mistake or your brain to tell you it was a mistake and continue moving ahead. You don’t have the luxury right now of spinning in indecision and fears.

You can’t worry about being wrong or making a wrong call or a wrong decision. Your community needs you right now. This is your moment to shine as a school leader. Not to be a perfect leader. Not even to be an A-plus leader, a A-minus leader. Let’s just be a leader. And being a leader is messy and it’s hard and we have to make decisions.

And sometimes we get new information and we have to change our mind and we have to adjust and recommunicate even when people are disappointed, even when people are stressed. They are looking for you to provide them certainty, leadership, answers, decisions, all of it.

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So, your community needs you right now. They need you to make decisions, even if they're not perfect, and lead them forward. Create certainty for them. They need to see that you are here for them right now, even from your home, even though they're at home and you're at home and that you're able and willing to show up in the midst of all of this chaos and crisis and uncertainty.

Your work, school leader, is to build your emotional and mental resiliency. And this is why we're going through this. This is our time, to practice mental and emotional wellbeing and evolvment and certainty, creating certainty for ourselves and for other people in the midst of chaos and uncertainty so that you can lead them to do the same.

There's going to be mistakes, but know this; you can handle the thoughts and emotions that come with any mistake you perceive that you make. Mistakes are neutral. They are situations. It's what you make them mean that can empower you or disempower you. Choose them to be learning experiences. That's it; neutralize them.

Step three, forgiveness. Step three requires us to forgive. We cannot move forward if we don't forgive ourselves and others. Forgiveness helps free your brain. It helps free your heart. It takes you out of burden. It releases you. It frees you. Our bosses are up there making big decisions quickly, just like you are. They're humans. They're going to make mistakes, as are all the leaders across the globe.

No one is exempt from making decisions and making mistakes. We have to practice forgiving them and know that they are in the same shoes we are. They're up there with the information they have, making decisions the best that they can, and then getting new information and then having to make new decisions.

They're in the same loop we are. Give them some grace. Give them some forgiveness, even when it's frustrating, even when it's making your life feel harder. Please consider trying forgiveness. Not for them. Not because

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you're excusing them or you're allowing them to be sloppy. We all are being sloppy right now. We're just trying to get the word out there and get the love and support out there to our communities.

But know that we must practice forgiving them so that we aren't clouded with judgment and resentment when we have to make our own decisions. If you're worried about what they're doing, you're not worried about what you need to be doing.

Adding judgment and resentment is going to add judgment and resentment that we receive as a leader. What you focus on grows. If you're focusing on being judgmental and holding grudges and being resentful for the decisions that leaders above you are making then you are going to attract judgment and resentment from the people you're leading. Let it go.

We must practice forgiveness of ourselves. If we made a mistake or we made a decision that had to be changed, give yourself the grace and practice forgiveness. That is the only way you can move forward. Otherwise you're going to be looking backwards, spinning on indecision, spinning on past regrets, spinning on mistakes that you say that you've made. You want to focus on forgiveness.

So, the three steps again, number one, moving ahead; moving your school ahead, moving yourself ahead. Make decisions. Make them with certainty. Make them with the most information you have at the time. Communicate them, execute them support people through them, evaluate the decision, and then redecide, rinse and repeat.

Number two, allow mistakes. Let them happen. Handle them gracefully. Retrospect is not something you can judge yourself for. When you spin in judgment, you're going to berate yourself and that serves no purpose. So, mistakes will be made. It's okay. Move along.

Number three, forgiveness. You move along by forgiving yourself and others. And you have to clear the clouds in your own brain and in your own heart.

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My master coach, Brooke, tells us that we don't have Coronavirus in our bodies. We have it in our minds. We're clouded by our thoughts and our fears and our panics and our overwhelm, by the Coronavirus impact on our brains.

So, keep that in mind. Go ahead. Move forward. Lead with grace. Lead with love. And lead with patience. We are all in this together and I've got your back.

So, if you need further support, you know where to find me, angelakellycoaching.com. I'm offering an eight-week personalized coaching program to get you school leaders through the finish line, to the end of this year. Unprecedented times, I realize it. You are doing so much amazing work. If you need the support, I am here for you.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit 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.