

Ep #128: Social Emotional Learning, Trauma-Informed Care, and Equity with Diana Patton



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Angela Kelly

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Hello, Empowered Principals. Welcome to Episode 128.

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. And welcome to today's podcast. I have a very lovely and special human being on the podcast here with me today, her name is Diana Patton. And she is the CEO of Diana R. Patton Consulting. She's a speaker and a social justice, and integrative health advocate as a coach and an attorney, by the way. And she's also the author of her memoir, *Inspiration in My Shoes*. And she's also, if that wasn't enough, she has recently published a book called *This Yogi's Journey*.

She consults with junior high and high schools and colleges. And what she does and why we have connected is that she wants to help educational organizations with her RISE program, R.I.S.E. speaking on leadership, social, emotional learning, diversity, inclusion. She's just all the things, this woman is one powerhouse. We have recently connected and become friends. She mentors young women on self-care, social, emotional intelligence, and really empowering our young youth so that they can step into their empowerment as they develop and grow into adulthood.

And I love her so much already and I asked her to be on the podcast today because of our similar missions and visions for our kids and schools, and

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how schools can evolve themselves into supporting our children. Not just from an academic standpoint, but from a social, emotional and mental wellbeing standpoint. So, Diana, welcome to the podcast.

Diana: Thank you so much for having me, I feel very blessed to be here. You're an amazing human being.

Angela: Thank you. Well like attracts like, so here we are doing our thing and it's just been a very empowering time to witness what is going on in our world, what is going on in our schools. And you and I have had some amazing conversations about this. So let's tell the listeners your story and how you shifted from being a full-time lawyer and an attorney into the work you are now doing with schools.

Diana: Yeah. So when I was in law school, my whole idea was coming from where I came from in high school trauma. I had a very abusive father. I was raised in an interracial marriage, my father was white, my mom was black. And being born in 1968 was a really challenging time for anyone, and especially for someone who didn't neatly fit into the black checkbox or the white checkbox, I was in both, and it was challenging.

So my whole idea when I was a teenager was be aware, thank you Sister Teresa from the school that I went to at St. Wendelin, for encouraging me to seek out that justice mindset. When I got out of law school I fell in the corporate world because I had no money. And I got married, and then I got sucked in and then I just forgot my why. And then I just started working in the corporate world. And I did negotiating contracts, and it's so funny

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because I'll tell you about school. I got my first D in law school and there I was working corporate.

Angela: As a contracts person.

Diana: Like that's funny. So anyways, it just goes to show you, these letter grades, I don't know. Anyways I don't know if they mean – they don't really mean anything to your whole life in general. But all the time, I never forgot my why.

And it was really settling when my brother tried to - unfortunately everybody in my family, seven of us kids, we all dealt with our trauma in our own way. And I'm the sixth child, and my brother is number seven and he really struggled, he was bullied a lot. And so many layers upon layers that after my father passed away unfortunately, he really lost his footing and he tried to kill my mom. And when he tried to kill my mom we were able to rehabilitate, you know, that was when I was really focused in on my family and helping my mom, and helping my brother.

And then months later he took his life, and it made me look at schools, and I was frustrated with our high school, why didn't you really see us, help us, and see who we were? That never left me, Angela, all my years of working corporate, I kept thinking about that, thinking about what's my role with that? And when my brother died I set up a scholarship called The Character Scholarship, because everything is all about character, all about emotions, and all about how we treat one another.

And so, fast forward many years, I was finding myself working as an attorney at General Council for a non-profit, good, healthy, awesome work.

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But still here I have in my mind, what am I supposed to be doing with schools?

And at the time when I was contemplating that I was also doing some work with a local school called the Polly Fox Academy. It's a school for pregnant and mothering teens, so I was working my General Council work and doing the work with the school and doing more and more work with the school. And seeing things that needed to be done that were similar to what should have been done when I was a kid. And it just set in my mind that I need to do more work with schools.

And after doing a local TEDx talk, I said, "If this TEDx talk goes viral, I'm going to go out and I'm going to help school." That TEDx talk did not go viral, I was no Brené Brown. But it made me realize, I need to get out here and do this work. I wrote my book, *Inspiration in My Shoes*.

And sadly, the Polly Fox Academy closed at the almost – at the same time my old high school closed. And to me that was get out there, Diana, and help schools rise. And that's when I made this, you know, I started doing my research, I started partnering with people and listening and really there's a whole body of evidence, 30 years of social and emotional learning evidence out there. Trauma informed care, there's thesis upon thesis written. We've got the CDC, all these people doing all this research, but why aren't schools changing? Why aren't we looking at this?

And I'm going, come on, and I'm not from the education world, so I don't have all of those layers of stuff that we had to do this, we've always done it this way. I'm coming here with this, hey, wait a second, I wanted this to happen in 1986. It's 2000, 2015, why aren't we doing it? And so blindly I go in, and I told every single advocate, "No, I'm not invited, but I'm pulling my

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seat to the table and we're going to have some conversations." That's what I do, and the RISE program was born.

Angela: Tell us about the RISE program.

Diana: So the RISE program is really about looking at, okay, we need to do an assessment, which right now, a lot of the Departments of Education have these questions that we can ask about social, emotional learning, about trauma informed care, about your ability to be able to self-care. So everything I do is like let's start, where are we? And so if I go into a district I want to know, okay, what's our baseline? And so we would do an assessment and see where we are. And then come out with, okay, these are the top things that we need to work on.

Social, emotional learning, trauma informed care, definitely, the equity and inclusion are huge. Inclusion and equity are not the same thing. So when we say inclusion we're saying that people feel like they know that they matter, that they feel heard, that they feel respected.

But then equity says, "Oh my gosh, this person needs this and this person needs that." We need to change our policies and practices. And these are some things that we're doing to help that individual, that child get to the same level, because they're not coming to school with the same types of abilities, which is different than inclusion. Because inclusion is that feeling, and it's that culture. But equity says, "I am willing to change some laws, change some practices, change some guidelines to see that."

And so where the RISE program comes in is let's raise the level of awareness, let's get some mileage and get some information on looking at ourselves, looking at what we're doing. And then saying, "What needs to be

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changed, and Superintendent Board can we do that, are we going to do that?” And then seeing where we are at the end of the year and giving workshops, education, those kinds of things to help us get there. But then at the end of the day, my social justice, civil rights work says, “But we’re not done unless we’re willing to change some practices.”

And that’s where the rubber meets the road for a lot of people. Is my corporate experience and my work in that area says that, “If you don’t have the buy-in at the beginning of your relationship,” that ultimately that’s what we need to change. Then it’s just another program, it’s just another speaking engagement, and people feel good for a moment but then it just goes right back to where we were before. And so that’s the real work and it takes a long time to get there.

Angela: Exactly. And what you said about changing policies and procedures, and the way we approach education can only change once we unveil the thoughts driving the current actions that we’re taking right now. And what I love about your program is that it sounds like it unpeels those layers of what are we currently thinking and feeling? And which is impacting the way we’re currently approaching education.

And what I love about this pandemic is it has required us to – it has put all of our thoughts and belief systems out on the table, it has become extremely apparent about the children who have, versus who don’t. Just education’s understanding of what’s really going on in people’s lives has been completely blown up. And I think that this is the perfect time for schools to embrace this idea of social, emotional learning and unveiling of what’s currently going on in our practice. And why do we need to change it? What’s behind it all and why is it so important?

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And I think this period of education's experience, or of this time, this point in time is really – it's an opportunity. It's an opportunity for people to rise and for education to rise into its next level of evolution. And I just love your work for that purpose.

Diana: Well, Angela, and I, yours as well because we're on the same page here. And what I do know is that here's where we know we fail, is if we go right back to where we were, because if that's the case then we failed.

And we should come out of this changed, if there's one thing I always heard from every district that I've worked in is, "We just can't connect with the parents, how do we get more parents engaged? How do we get more students engaged? How do we get them to want to come to school?" Well, now it's like the buffet is right there. Now, how are you going about it, are you reaching out? Do you understand your customers? These are your customers; those are called students, what are their pain points? What do they love?

Obviously it has a lot to do with creativity and TikTok and they love that. Why weren't teachers and educators ever deeply involved in social media, why? Because we had rules and guidelines that says, "Keep an arm's length distance from your kids, don't let them know who you are. Make certain they don't have." That was a theme and a lot of schools did that, a lot of educators did that. They did that when I was a kid, they don't want...

Angela: Yeah, out of fear.

Diana: Out of fear. Hopefully those old archaic policies mindsets are in the trash. And hopefully we don't have unions out there protecting that type of behavior. Hopefully we are really moving into this new era. And to be quite

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honest with you, Angela, I've done some research, and maybe, I don't know this but I have never seen a huge drastic pendulum shift in education ever. Every institution, even the automotive industry, every industry has had catastrophic shifts that have caused them to change, retool, do things differently, education, I haven't seen that.

Angela: Until now, this is the catalytic event that is going to change the face of education, it's really invigorating. And I can see, I think what will happen, and this is my prediction is that education's going to split. There will be the people who are like, "I'm in, I'm ready, I want to change. I want to change the way I'm thinking and feeling. I want us to rise up and to do this work." And then there will be people who are like, "This isn't what I signed up for. I wanted to just know, status quo, consistency, safety." Just kind of going back to what I know is comfortable.

I think it's going to separate, and it's going to separate those who are ready to step up to the next level and those who are – and no fault of their own, they just make a decision to do something else with their lives. I think that's fine, there's no right or wrong here. But there is the opportunity for an evolution. And I think it's sad that it took this type of an event for education to really be shaken.

And I just think that the institution is so grounded and it's so deep in its roots that it needed a massive earthquake to shake things up. And unfortunately this is the event that it took, but we can look at it as we needed this, it is time and what are we going to do to rise to the challenge?

Diana: Yeah. I have always seen education as like an iceberg. If you're not in the educational system at all you only see like that little tip. But what we don't see are the years upon years of systematic rules, guidelines that

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haven't worked. But we just go, "It's okay." And we know it's not working but we just keep not looking at the deep, deep roots, because sometimes people, it's just too overwhelming. But like you said, this is going to allow us to be able to do that.

And I feel a lot of people really need to kind of come to this understanding that we're also seeing budget cuts. In Ohio there's a 300 million dollar budget cut that's happening to education, so we have to think differently.

And I really hope that administration, board members really take that time to understand that their educators, some educators, they have great ideas but no one's listening to them. Say, "Hey, can we partner more with our social workers? Can we partner more with these people in the community?" Because if we are required to look at the whole child, and understand equity, it might take more than one person in a classroom to do that, and say, "Well, I don't have the money."

Well, we have to then think differently of what partners we need in education to come alongside us. Why not form those partnerships now with hospitals, with non-profit organizations, and some have already done that. Because it's going to take that village in education to really make things happen.

Angela: Exactly. And one of the things that I have spoken to in past episodes of the podcast is we all know. And what you said about people just don't want to like, they don't want to look at the truth, at the deep roots of what's going on, because it brings up really uncomfortable feelings. And what I'm willing to say is that part of what's happening in the educational system is that it's a very top down organization.

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So when you think about why high schools act the way they do, it's because of the colleges. The colleges back in the day, they were the holder of knowledge, you had to go to college in order to get a career that made you evolve and advance financially, and it's basically your status, your title or your status, your position, whatever. And over time as being online has given that access to so many more people, colleges are finding other ways to keep that power and control over high school, middle school, elementary school all the way down to pre-K.

And I like to ask educators, school leaders, "What would a high school like if the only focus wasn't trying to get kids into college? What would that look like? How would that feel to lead that?" And that's where these programs would come in and be substantial, not just a side thing, not just a we have to, to check the box and say we are compliant.

But really to create a school that is inclusive, that is welcoming, that meets the needs of individual kids. Not because the colleges are telling us we have to get this score or this SAT this or ACT that or whatever, but because we are in the business of evolving human beings.

Diana: Yeah. Well, if that's the case then we'd have to change the gifted program. Because the gifted program right now is because you know how to take a test and you know how to do good on these tests, otherwise you're not gifted. What? It took me so long to realize how really gifted I am. It took me about 25 years to realize that my gift of gab has produced me a pretty good career, and I've learned how to sharpen it.

If someone would have told me that my expressions, and that my ability to have my passion and all that stuff, if you would have told me that in high school, "That you need to keep sharpening that," I could have saved 25

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years of therapy and everything else. But if you would have told me when I was 15 years old that what I was struggling with, the trauma, “It’s not your fault, you didn’t cause that, in fact, here’s what you can do to help yourself regulate. Here’s what you can do to help yourself feel a sense of calm. Here’s how your emotions – what’s the meaning on your emotion.”

If you had told me that when I was 15 years old, I would be so much better off, but instead the last 25 years I’ve had to learn this on my own, I had to go find books, I had to go, oh my gosh. I don’t want kids to have to do that. And as an educator this should jazz you up, you should be jazzed up thinking, if I could teach my kids this now, oh wow, we’d have less kids going to jail. We’d have less kids on the streets feeling like they’re lost and alone. If this doesn’t excite you then I’m just going to say, I know it excites you because that’s why you went into education.

Angela: A 100%.

Diana: Exactly, that’s why you went into education. You want to help that human being become a better human being, that’s why. And because of these factions, and these laws, and these confinements of testing, has made you feel like you’re crazy. You’re not crazy, educators, you’re not crazy. And I keep feeling like – I think I’ve told you this, Angela, I feel like the movie, Finding Nemo. Do you remember the Finding Nemo, when Nemo was at the end of the movie trying to tell the fish, “Swim down,” so they can break the net?

Angela: Yes.

Diana: Yeah, we need to swim down so we can break that net called testing and called those old rules so that we can be free to do the work of

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educating each human being to be the better human being, and be what they were called to be. Now, that would be really cool.

Angela: That is the plan. That is the plan.

Diana: That's the plan, yes.

Angela: And you know what, I love that you said this, because I believe 100% in my body, that educators want this. Teachers want to teach in this way, school leaders want to lead in this way, district leaders want to lead in this way. I believe that, it's almost like they've been brainwashed to believe that the only way is the way that the laws tell us, and the policies. And this whole, like what I've seen over the course of time is that the energy has shifted from trusting schools to finding all of the things wrong with our schools.

So parents are coming at the school leaders and the teachers, and the counties are coming at the districts, this whole idea of like, I think it probably came with No Child Left Behind back in 2000. Where the hockey stick came into being and 100% of kids had to be proficient. This whole like we're going to come in and fix you because you're wrong, and you're broken, and you're doing it wrong and you don't have the right people on the bus or whatever.

I think that mindset has locked educators down into an incredible sense of scarcity and fear. And they are afraid to even speak up on their students' behalf and on their own behalf. Because I will tell you, educators are dealing with not only their own traumas from their life, but they are taking on the traumas of their students and their colleagues. We've got work to do.

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Diana: You see, here's the thing, this isn't nothing but civil rights, don't you all know that this is exactly what Martin Luther King was trying to tell everybody? Listen, if we spoke up, if they spoke up we might risk getting lynched, we might risk all these other things. The same thing is happening now, it's just a different type of venue. It's a different type of box. But we have to have a revolution, we have to have – this is not like, no, no, we have to have a revival.

And we need leaders who are willing to be that leader, stand out, get the tomatoes thrown at you, get that thrown at you. People aren't going to like what you have to say, but you have to believe in a dream, you have to have that dream, just like Martin Luther King. Thank God he didn't stop dreaming and thank God he kept doing what he was doing, and bringing all those people. Because courage in the face of fear is contagious, and that's the reason why my girl, Brené, let's give a shout out to Brené Brown.

Angela: Brené Brown.

Diana: Okay, thank you, Brené for really bringing this up and leading and helping and using your platform for educators, thank you so much. And talking about courage, and vulnerability, and transparency because we need that right now, we need leaders like that, you know it's true. Sometimes when I talk to superintendents, and I get you've got all this confinement, but can we have a real conversation? Can we really dig down deep? Do we have to have 35 years of research to say why it's good to be emotionally sound? Do we have to have so much?

Because sometimes I think our – and now I'm preaching, so sometimes we get into this like we've got to have this thesis, and I'm an attorney, I get evidence, but we are over-thinking this. We are over-thinking this because

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we've been beat down. And so that's the reason why I'm here. I do not profess to be so evidence based everything, I know I have to have evidence, and I'm using that, and it says it on my website, yes.

But when it comes down to it I am passionate about this issue, and passion runs everything, it overrides a law. Why? Because it will eventually override a law, if we get enough people passionate about this issue and saying, "You know what," and that's what this whole pandemic has done, your money, right, stares, look, hair color, nails.

Angela: Forget all of it.

Diana: Forget it, look; this is what I look like. If you don't like it, get over it, I'm going to be in my house, this is what it looks like. So can we get that raw with education?

Angela: It is time.

Diana: It's time. I'm feeling good.

Angela: You just said it, girl, you just said it.

Diana: Let's go to D.C. Oh, well, we can't right now.

Angela: We can virtually.

Diana: Yes, we can.

Angela: So my educator brain is thinking about all of the challenges and the struggles and the obstacles that superintendents are telling. So in your

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opinion as – like your attorney brain, when superintendents like – and I can see how they would believe this to be really true and they feel like it's out of their hands, out of their control. What in your opinion in terms of laws and policies and all that, what space do superintendents, and district, and site leaders have to start bringing this new way of being in education? How can they start bringing it in without having to wait for a policy to tell them that it's okay?

Diana: Okay, if you read anything on Gallup or you read all these things about how to do things in terms of being in a pandemic as a leader, what are you going to do? You'd better start putting down your vision, what's your vision? Do you know your customers? Do you know what's really going on with them? What are their pain points? Get their pain points, put them on paper. What do they aspire? What do they need? What are their needs? And being very honest with that, because then you can tell a story, because you can't tell a story if you don't know the story.

So if I were in that position I'd be spending some time gathering some information, I'd be gathering data. And you don't put a vision together based on what you physically see. You put a vision together about what you see as utilizing your creative, innovative mindset. And if you are traumatized, you as a superintendent, let me get back to basics, if you yourself, you need to get yourself together or work on your own social, emotional learning. Work on your own self-awareness and then you can start to get that into your teachers.

If you haven't sat down, sit down; ask them what are their pain points. There's a lot of work that you can do right now, and regardless of the rule changing. This is what leaders do as they set forth that vision, based on the

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story, then they have a story to – then you do like any civil rights activist or anyone, you present that to the powers that be.

They were doing some of that in Ohio with this issue that we have called EdChoice, but we weren't telling the true story. Public schools need to be more public, you all need to go in there and get your laundry and put it out there. Stop trying to act like we don't have these issues. And so there's a little bit of being honest with yourself. And the private schools need to be less private, if we're going to talk about that, private schools need to be less private, public schools need to be more public about what's really going on, so that's what I would do.

Anyway what is that going to do? Well, with that mindset, well, what is that going to do, nothing. We've got to have a mindset of I believe in a better way. I believe in a better way, why? Because I know there's a better way, is because my mindset is a growth mindset, I have a growth mindset. And so therefore there's always opportunities to grow.

I would want to work for that leader, who always believes in a better way. And you can call them dreamers. Well those who are the dreamers are the ones who have made changes, because they get other people around them to make changes. And they get someone like myself, like let's go, right?

Angela: Right. Well, and I love that you said this because this month's theme for the podcast, *The Empowered Principal Podcast* is possibility. And I am pushing this concept of possibility because think about it, everything that is currently in our world, physical, computers or otherwise, used to be impossible. And the only way they came into existence is because somebody's brain decided to believe that one day it could be

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possible, we could go to the moon. We could have civil rights. We could have iPhone computers in the palm of our hands.

Everything we've ever created in the world was started as an impossibility, but it was fuelled with the idea that it was possible. So this whole idea of vision and possibility, this is the time that school leaders can explore and play with possibility beyond anything they've ever dreamed before.

Diana: Right. And if you physically see it then that may not be where we need to be. Because where we're trying to go is into the unseen realm, and maybe you need to get some motivation, maybe you need to watch the movie, Hidden Figures to see these people thinking and dreaming of space. They didn't have anything written down, they had to dream this up, and then they put some calculations to it and then they made it happen.

And principals, are you all supporting each other, are you all coming together, are you guys dreaming together? Where's your mastermind? Where are you guys getting to? Angela, that's you, get these principals together and have them dream big dreams and big thoughts. And I have actually, through this pandemic came up with this idea that I need to pivot and rise, I want to help women. I want to help women pivot and rise into this calling, into this mindset, have the mindset of advocacy.

And so from this pandemic, because I was just solely focused on schools, I decided to create this, this mastermind, where we can get these people thinking and advocating. We all need to do that. And by the way, my pivot in RISE Mastermind, they can go to riseadvocates.com.

Angela: Go get it, play it.

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Diana: Play it, but see, this is the thing, everybody needs to mastermind, and mastermind is coming together and dreaming big dreams. And then saying, “Well, if I had this I could do this, if I had this I could do this.” And just from my mindset of knowing principals. Principals, do they have anybody advocating for them?

Angela: They’ve got me and you.

Diana: This is the thing, we need to rally around them, Angela, and just let them know that, you know, won’t you guys come together? Can you guys come together and create this and to be these power figures that you know you can be? Because you know your kids, principals, know your kids, you know you’re educators, that’s your job is to know them.

Angela: Exactly. And what I love about what we’ve talked about, and principals do have some supports, but I will say the reason I created my company is because I saw the gap, I felt the gap, I lived the gap. There was a gap between the level of support for teachers and you’ve got your grade level, you’ve got your colleagues, you’ve got mentors, you’ve got instructional coaches and then you step into administration. It’s like, well, you’re on your own, I hope you know everything, and there is a huge gap in support.

So I think that what you said is brilliant, people need to come together to know they’re not alone, to know that you don’t have to do this fight alone, we do it together. And we inspire one another into action based on possibility. But there’s two components, you can mastermind, but if you don’t manage your own mind, so there’s two, there is the mastermind component. But you’ve got to get into the private space of your brain and do some house cleaning.

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And that's where my private coaching services come into play, because you can't see around your own biased thoughts, or your own judgments, or the harshness of, like how many times did I think as a school leader I can't fight the system, I can't make these changes? The problem's too big for one person, so the mastermind tells you, no, us together combined, we together rise and we fight this challenge, and we have possibility. And then you go back and you're like, "Okay, how do I get my mind believing that this is actually possible every single day?"

Working on my mind, cleaning up my thoughts, being open and willing to expose thoughts that I've had in the past that I'm ready to let go of in order to make change for the better.

Diana: You got it, and that's the real stuff right there, because most people, it's mindset, the fear, it's this doubt, it's this worry, because why is it that some people, they know what they need to do but they don't do it? I'm guilty of it too because I get into this false evidence, appearing real, that isn't real. And then I got stuck, I was stuck for two or three weeks within this pandemic, like, "Ugh, what am I looking at." And here I go with another movie, *The Incredibles*, Elsa Mode, "Pull yourself together."

I've got to pull myself together, like, "Diana, what are you doing?" And re-engage in my faith, because I serve an amazing God and he's going to help me and he's going to direct the universe to help me. Why do I know that? Because I say that. It's just you've got to have that true leader, and I thank you, Angela, for being that true leader for so many people. And to be able to get them coached up to, the people to get to where they need to be, and that's what we need in this world.

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And I always want to hang around people like that because, see, the thing is, is that your work is hard, the work is hard. You've got to go to the people and go, "Okay, we'll do it together," cheer, cheer, cheer, cheer, cheer. And then go out to your work and everybody's looking at you like, "Why is she so happy? Why does she want to talk like that?" Because I find sometimes when I go to schools, everybody's like, "I'm just tired, I don't want to hear anybody else today."

Angela: It's so true, yeah.

Diana: "Why is she so happy? I'm sitting in the back, I just want to sleep." Because their work is hard so then you have to be the one to tell them about possibility. Even though they look at you like you've got five faces, you've got to be the one who says, "Yeah." And then when you walk away from that experience feeling like crap because sometimes you – because as a human nature, you just want some affirmation. You've got to go back to your group and say, "Well that was hard." And then you get filled back up and then you go back out again because that is the work.

Angela: It's the work, a 100%. So what suggestions do you have for my empowered leaders out there who are working to adjust to this new way of life and education? What's one thing you would like to offer to them in support, and what's the next step that they can take?

Diana: Well, first of all I would say that if you haven't done your own inventory, which that's first things first, is to begin to look at yourself. I love this book, *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself: Lose Your Mind and Gain a New One*. I love those kinds of books, who is it, Joe Dispenza?

Angela: Yes, it is.

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Diana: I just feel like to the extent that you can do – if you haven't done your own self-assessment on your own emotional intelligence, take the emotional test by Travis Bradberry, Jean Greaves. I say start there, start to – of course call you.

Angela: Call you.

Diana: Do your own self-assessment and then from there I would start having dialog, real difficult conversations with your staff. If you haven't been communicating with them and telling them in all transparency, another book, Dare to Leave by Brené Brown. Or, Permission to Feel, Permission to Feel is another great book by Marc Brackett from the Yale Center for Emotional Learning.

Angela: I've got tons of reading, see, this is the thing, these have all been listed in the podcasts in the show notes.

Diana: Readers are readers, if you aren't, you know, and I know that we, sometimes we folks don't have time, yes, you have to have time, you cannot be doing this work in isolation. We have to keep learning. And so I would say that that's where I would start is that home self-assessment. And having these conversations, these types of conversations, your podcast, these types of difficult conversations. And another great book, Difficult Conversations by Sheila Heen and Doug Stone.

These are the difficult conversations and then start taking notes about what do you see they are dealing with, with what's on the ground, or what are they dealing with, and documenting those pain points. And then of course there's so many tools out there, I mean Google has put together a whole library of virtual learning. That's something that you can start putting that

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strategy together for the virtual learning, some have already begun to do that. Those are just a few steps that I would start to take.

I've got my educators on the RISE Facebook page, is a great page to learn some stuff. I also love the company, Character Strong. Character Strong is a company that has some great curriculums together that you can buy virtually. They just did what's called the Virtual Whole Child Summit that you can go to characterstrong.com. And you can do some of this online PD Professional Development. And I'm plugging them because I'm going to be doing some work with them, but they've been in business longer than I have.

Angela: It's an amazing group. I've been looking into it since you suggested it to me.

Diana: Yeah, so those are some great resources. I love Danny Steel, are you familiar with Danny Steel, he's a principal? He's got the book called Essentials for Principals, another great book. Again, I'll keep going, Kids Deserve It, it's another great book. Build up your library, this is preparation time. And what's happening with a lot of schools is they're thinking, status quo, usually you're building your budget, you're doing all these kinds of things for your fall for PD.

I really encourage folks to just start thinking outside the box and really looking at social, emotional learning and trauma informed care and equity as being your core principles, building strategies with that in mind. And, again, there's tons of research out there on this, Center for Social and Emotional Learning, CASEL, connect with them. So, Angela, I've got too many resources, I could go on, and on, and on, and on, and on about the many resources. But those, that's where I would start.

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Angela: And what I'll say to you listeners out there, what I know is happening in your brain right now, you're thinking, I don't have time to do all of that, that's so many resources, so many books. Pick one.

Diana: One, yeah, pick one.

Angela: Pick one, and first of all audibles have, many of these books are on tape, you can take a walk and listen to the book, you can listen to this podcast of course. You can check out Diana's Facebook, or just pick one or two things and focus just on that until you are ready to move on. And one thing I want to share, I just had my personal coaching call right before this Zoom meeting with Diana. And I was telling them that business is booming, I am creating professional development, I'm really excited, I'm connecting with more people. But my brain is fixated on not enough time.

It was going back to this old story about how I didn't have enough time to take my daily walk or to do my yoga exercising. And my coach, Jen said this brilliant thing to me and I want to share it with you right now. She said, "There isn't two components of your life, work life balance is a myth, it's not a thing, it's just life. And work is life and home life is life, Angela is one package."

And so she was saying to me that when you schedule in, let's say you want to take an hour to read a book or to listen to a book while you're taking a walk, that is a work task. That is not a personal task or a professional task; it's just a task that helps you evolve. Because if you evolve your person, you evolve your leadership, it's all one package. And I know my friend, Daniel Bauer out there who's got Better Leaders, Better Schools podcast, he says, "In order to make the school better, it's the quality of the leader, better leader, better school."

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So you have to choose to evolve yourself in order to evolve your school. That comes first and foremost, and what Diana said is so important, start with you, pick one thing and dig in deep and do that really well.

Diana: Yeah. And I just have to say, if you want something different, you can't do what you've already done, it's insanity to think that you're going to have something change if you aren't willing to do something different. And it's really looking at your environment to say, because again we're talking about dreaming and possibilities. And we have to, like you said, you run the coaching call, I have the coaches. So it's like really having to be with other people who are of that mindset. So the thing I know, I don't have to live with trauma anymore. Trauma doesn't have to rule me, it's in my brain.

I can choose to do my own self-care and my own work so that I don't have to live out of a trauma experience, out of stress. But it's a choice that I have to make every day. And I'm sure that every principal, I believe in every principal that they can do that, I believe that. And your podcast is so helpful because it just gives this belief in that possibility, so thank you for what you do.

Angela: And thank you so much, thank you for being a part of *The Empowered Principal Podcast* today, Diana. And I'm just so honored to know you and to be my...

Diana: It's an honor to know you.

Angela: Have my new friend in this mission, and this vision, and then this passion of bringing the most important aspect to education. And that is evolving the human being. This isn't about curriculum companies for profit, this isn't about colleges making their money and getting kids into school.

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This is about us evolving the human mind, and to do that you have to evolve the human heart, the human soul, all of it, we're all one package. So, I just, I can't wait to continue working with you and I am so grateful that you took this time to be with us today.

Diana: Thank you so very much, it was a blessing.

Angela: Alright, thank you, it was a blessing. And to my empowered leaders, I hope this has been helpful, may you go forward and have an empowered amazing week. Take care. Bye bye.

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