

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

Hello, Empowered Principals. Welcome to Episode 131.

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, and happy Tuesday, everybody. I'm so excited to be here with you. This week and this month, I feel this renewed sense of energy and possibility because I have been focusing my brain on all that's possible this month.

I spent the last couple of months kind of processing the changes, processing the shock and then helping other people process the shock and the changes and kind of, like, just getting through the moments of shifting from teaching and leading on campus to teaching and leading from home.

Now, I'm starting to get this sense of what truly is possible. And it's blowing my mind. It's got me fired up and energized. I hope the podcast has been extremely inspiring for you to think about the gifts that this experience is opening and creating for us.

One of my coaches just today was talking about how often our human brain shifts into FOMO. You've heard of that, what is it, fear of being left out? Fear of missing out, that's what it is. FOMO, fear of missing out. And our brains like to default to what isn't working, what's not going well, what we're not a part of, what we don't have control over, what our life doesn't look like, what our job or our career or our school doesn't look like or our family.

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

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

Our brain defaults to that. And my coach was suggesting to the group that we flip the FOMO into opportunities and possibilities. And it really got me thinking about how we approach teaching and learning, how we are always looking at the negative aspect and what isn't working and what we're missing out on and what we don't know, all of those things. And flipping it into possibility and what that might look like.

So, today, I want to share with you – it's really an email that I crafted for a potential client when she was trying to make decisions. And I believe that the most powerful asset that we have as humans is our ability to make decisions. And we can use our decisions to create possibility. And we need to make our decisions from the place, from the emotional state of what's possible, of believing that something that isn't currently possible and feels impossible, but believing and leaning into the idea that it could be one day.

Okay, so I'm going to share with you this email conversation that I had with this potential client. And I really spent a great deal of time thinking about, how does a person, a leader, make decisions? So, a couple of things to know about decisions. I talk about decisions a lot on this podcast because if there's one thing we do as educators, it is the art of making decisions all day long.

And you can read all kinds of information about making decisions. I know I have a previous podcast about decision making. It's the most important thing you do, not just as a school leader, but in your life. Because every thought and emotional state we're in leads us to a decision of what we do and what we say and how we show up and the energy that we put behind our leadership and our life.

So, I believe that when you're making a decision, first of all, the way you decide anything is the way you decide everything. So, you have a process

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

for making decisions. And in order to create new results in your career, at your school, in your personal life, the only way to do that is to look at the way and study the way you currently make decisions, why you decide the way you decide, basically what you're thinking and feeling, that leads you to those decisions, and what process you use to make that decision.

And if you are not getting the results you want in your life – and this is true for all of us, myself included, every human on the planet, every result we're not getting is a product of the way we are making decisions. And so, in order to change it, what do we have to do? You have to change the way that you approach decision making. Super-powerful.

So today, we're going to talk about how you make decisions coming from the place of possibility. So, there are only three responses that we ever have to a decision. So, a decision presents itself. That's the situation. And we either are going to decide yes, or no, or we stall in indecision. So, there's yes, there's undecided, and there's no.

Having to make a decision is never hard. It's a moment. We decide. It's a moment. What feels hard is our brain's interpretation of what that decision is, what it means about us, the impact we believe it will have on ourselves and on other people, and we add value and intensity and weight to that decision. That's what makes it feel hard.

Now, you don't wake up and think that brushing your teeth is a difficult decision. I hope not. But for most of us, we get up and we decide to brush our teeth in the morning without much weight or contemplation about the pros and the cons and is it going to wake up your husband if you've got Sonicare going on or what will happen if I don't brush my teeth? What will happen in 10 years from now?

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

No, you made a decision to brush your teeth. It feels good. it tastes good. You want fresh breath. You want your teeth to be healthy. So, you do it. It's autopilot. Decision made. Done. It isn't hard.

But there are things that we take and we believe that it's so hard to make the decision. And when we decide that the decision is difficult, we want to avoid it. We resist making the decision. We don't want to feel the feelings that come with having to make a decision one way or the other. So, we're going to talk about what that looks like.

But first of all, I want to talk about what saying yes to a decision looks like. So, there are three ways of saying yes. So, number one, there is an empowered yes. The empowered yes is when you just know. It's a no-brainer. You say yes. It feels very aligned to yourself, your values, your goals.

You just decide. You say yes. You feel great about the decision. And there's no looking back. It's just a yes, absolutely 100% in. That is an empowered decision. And we're going to talk about how to make more of those kinds of decisions in a minute.

There is also the, "Yes, but I got super-busy." Like, "Oh yeah, I was planning to do that. Sure, I'm all in. But it took me time or I forgot about it, I got distracted. I got interrupted and we put off the decision," kind of at a subconscious level. So, yeah, we read something, we decide yes, but we got sidetracked.

So, you fully intend to say yes but your schedule or your other priorities creep up and it takes you away from finalizing your decision. This is solved by implementing a simple and effective time management strategy. I have

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

one that I use and that I teach. But if you have one, implement it and make sure that your decisions are being decided, that you're not putting them off.

Because we know what the brain will do. The further away, the longer it takes to make a decision, you will always revert to no if you're not a solid yes. You have to be 100% yes. If you want to answer yes but you're putting it off, say yes no in the moment. Use an effective strategy system to get you to make decisions in real time.

Third, there is a yes, but I have to get permission. So, I'm sure, as a school leader, you have had the experience of wanting to say yes, being all in, in your body and your brain, you feel very aligned to the decision, but you feel like you have to run it by others. And I'll admit, definitely, there are times where you're a solid yes, but in order to move forward, for your school perhaps, let's say you have to run it by your superintendent or you have to run it by HR or you have to run it through the school board or you have to get a budget approval or whatever it is.

So, those times happen. But not saying yes because you have to get permission from somebody requires you to believe in that yes so strongly that you're committed to not only selling yourself on that decision and owning that decision fully, but by fighting for it, by selling other people with your positivity, your enthusiasm, your willingness to go all into this decision.

So, for example, let's say – this actually, I know somebody who did this. A principal did not have a playground and they were so committed to that playground that they were willing to do all of this work and to hustle and to earn the money. They worked with the PTA and they raised \$50,000 so that they could build a playground on their campus for their students. It was so amazing to see this all happen.

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

Did they have to get approval from the superintendent and from the school board – and actually it was like maintenance, they had to get codes and approval, all the safety guidelines, all of those things. But the enthusiasm and the willingness for that principal to see that decision through to the end, even when people needed to give permission, per se, that she was able to push through that idea all the way to the end.

So, here's what I'm saying. Even when you have a yes but you need to get permission, that doesn't mean that the permission aspect of your decision-making process needs to be a problem. You can just decide that, yes, I'm doing this and yes, I'm going to figure it out, even when I have to get permission, end of story, game done, it's on.

See the difference? The commitment, the energy, the enthusiasm behind your decision will help those who need to grant your permission, you know, the sales pitch to get them to say yes, if that makes sense.

Okay, so if you need to make a decision and you're looking at this decision and you're undecided, this is when your brain is telling you that you're not sure what you want to decide. It says it needs more information or it needs more time to think about it or it needs to get other people's opinions and input on the decision before you make it. This is the most disempowered place to be as a leader.

It feels very reasonable to give yourself more time, to collect more information, to check in with your compadres, and to get more input before you make a decision. Your brain wants you to be indecisive. It's kind of funny. It hates indecisiveness, but it wants to hold onto indecisiveness because it fears what making that decision will mean.

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

When we allow a decision to go left undecided, that is what I call an open cycle. It's a decision that sits in the back of your brain. And what that does is take up energy and space and focus and time away from other things that you want to be completing.

It's like a program on your computer that's running in the background, even though you're not using that program, it's sucking down your battery life because it's taking up energy in the background. So, your brain does this too.

It wants to keep that open so you have options, so you can feel flexible, so you can get more information. But what it's really doing is sucking you down because it's on in the background all the time. And you'll know if you're doing this if you wake up in the night and you have a lot on your mind.

When you have open cycles, your brain is always on. If you're a person who says, "I can't shut my brain down. I can't stop thinking about work..." which hello, that's me. I work on this too. I have to be very, very scheduled and planned about the decisions I'm going to make each day for my business, how long I'm going to spend each time giving that decision, and what I'm going to make that decision mean.

So, I have to be very scripted in my decision-making process in order for me to sleep well at night. So, if you're a person who is up with a lot of things on your mind, that is when you know you have a lot of open cycles, a lot of indecisiveness.

The other way we stay undecided is when we are afraid to decide. We also can choose to stay in indecision because we're afraid of making a decision. We worry that if it's the right decision or the wrong decision or what people

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

will think if we make this decision or if we make that decision, we don't want to flip-flop our decision so we just don't make any decision at all.

And what we're trying to do is avoid people's reactions or judgments. But the problem with this, like, your brain is justifying and rationalizing this and it sounds very reasonable at the time. But the problem with your brain's argument is that no matter what you decide, indecision is a decision.

So, no matter what you decide, you decide to go left, you decide to go right, you decide to go straight, you decide to stay put, indecision, no matter what, somebody's going to have an opinion about any decision that you make. You can't be 100% supported, but you're also not going to be 100% judged. So, just know that people's opinions of you are going to be 50-50 as well, just like life.

Some people will love it. some people won't. But the way that you show up, if you are 100% committed to your decision, if you want to say yes to something, even when other people don't want it, you can bring that enthusiasm and commitment to that decision and it will help you through the process by being grounded in your yes and your why.

So, what we do when we stay in indecision is that we believe that we can control what other people think of us or their reaction to our decision if we don't decide. We think that, "Oh, I'm just going to sit here. I don't have to worry because I don't want people being stressed about the decision."

Our brain does not like to be in indecision. It feels highly uncomfortable. It tells you to stay in indecision, but it feels really awful to do it. And ultimately, a confused mind will always say no, just to get out of the discomfort.

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

So, the longer you wait to make a decision every single time, your brain is going to be like, “I don’t know, I don’t know. I hate this feeling. I know what to decide. I’m just going to say no...” status quo, go back to what I know, it’s the easiest thing. And that is when we make rash decisions to avoid the feelings that come with the decision-making process.

If you can step into the discomfort and allow yourself to feel uncomfortable and to push yourself to make a decision, even though you know not everybody will like it, you will be a much more empowered and decisive leader.

Now, the third option, saying no. There is an empowered no, and that is the same thing as an empowered yes. It feels very certain. It feels very aligned to your values and your goals, and you just say no. you feel really good about it.

So, for example, if somebody offers you a drug, you are going to say no with 100% confidence. You’re not tempted to think about it or just be polite and do the drug anyway because you don’t want to offend them and you don’t want to do the drug. No, you’re going to say, “No thank you,” and you’re going to move on. 100% certainty there. That’s an empowered no. You know when you know the answer is no when you feel that alignment.

Second of all, there is a no, like you know it’s a no, you feel the no in your body, but you don’t want to say no. This happens to me when somebody asks me to volunteer or to go to an event I don’t want to go to. And it’s when your essential self, like your heart is just a creaming no but you don’t want to be rude or offensive.

And that’s because we’ve been taught, it’s very deeply ingrained, that we need to be polite and saying no feels very uncomfortable because we don’t

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

want to hurt somebody's feelings, we don't want them to be offended, we don't want them to be mad at us. But really, we don't like being told no ourselves, so we don't want to tell other people no because we know that no doesn't feel good to us, so we don't want to do it to them.

We delay saying no because we believe that it's hurtful. That's when we get those little white lies or the fibs, "Oh, I'm so sorry I can't make it. I've got other plans." When really you don't, "I've got to wash my hair tonight," or whatever.

So, just know that when you want to say no but you don't want to say no, that is because you're wanting to please people. You're not wanting to hurt somebody's feelings.

There's a third no. You are gravitating to say no to a decision, but you really want to say yes. So, it's the flip. It's when you say no, but you want to say yes. So, two things are happening. Number one, you either feel pressure from the outside, from other people, to say no. Or you are afraid to say yes.

So, you're either feeling the pressure to say no. And what you can do for that is explore why that pressure is bothering you. And that's because you're worried what other people are thinking of you, and see if giving into that pressure will result in the outcome that you ultimately want for yourself and your district.

Now, if you feel the urge to say no because you're feeling fear, this is the moment of transformation. This is when you have to acknowledge that you want to say yes and the reason it feels terrible and scary is because it's a different way of making decisions.

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

You are consciously deciding to do something different than you normally do so that you can transform and evolve yourself, so that you can get the results that you've been wanting but not able to get in your old decision-making process. So, you use the rung of belief, you use the bringing up all the possibilities and what can be and you step into believing what transformation can look and feel like for you.

And this is when your mind wants a 100% guarantee, it wants to run back to the status quo. It wants to go back to certainty and predictability. And it wants to avoid all the scary things that will happen if you should decide in a new and different way.

But let me tell you something, that is not how change happens. That is now how you transform. That is not how you evolve your brain and your leadership and your school and education. Change only can happen when we make decisions in spite of fear. We have to make a commitment to try doing things in a different and new way.

And when we go all in on a new decision, even when we're not certain of the outcome, we're going to have to experience courage, which feels horrible. It's scary. I know, I've said this before, but I think about ziplining and every time I think about how scared I was to zipline, I physically had to lean down onto that zipline to get myself to go from one side to the other. That is what new decisions feel like.

People want you to be decisive. They want you to be fully sold on your own decisions. And the more excited and committed you are about a decision you've made, the more other will follow you. People are attracted to leaders who are positive and enthusiastic about the decisions that they're making.

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

They want you to make decisions. They want you to be decisive, to communicate those decisions, to back them up, to be enthusiastic. And you know what? To be willing to redecide. It's okay. You're not going to make decisions perfectly. That's not the goal here. The goal is to make the most empowered decision possible by starting with the ideas of what you believe is possible.

So, when you believe something is possible, even if there's no evidence to prove it, and you make a decision from that state of possibility, that is when you create change. That is when you become a thought leader. That is when you become a legacy to your school and to education. And I am inviting you to step into your full empowerment this season.

Right now, this is the moment of opportunity. Please reach out and choose from a very decisive place to talk with me as your coach and to get you the transformation from an empowered place of possibilities. Have an amazing empowered week. I'll talk to you guys next week. Take care, bye.

Hey, principals, listen up. I've created a professional learning program for you and your team to build your capacity and lead your staff through the empowerment process. I've designed personalized growth experience for you and your school. You'll learn how to apply the leadership triad to empower your staff and students.

This is the moment where the perfect time and opportunity meet. Education will never be the same and I have the tools to help you navigate the change. To learn more, sign up for a free consultation at angelakellycoaching.com/programs. I'll 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

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

Ep #131: Decisions from Possibility

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.