

## Ep #145: Abundant Thinking



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## Ep #145: Abundant Thinking

Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 145.

Welcome to *The Empowered Principal Podcast*. A not-so-typical educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy by refining your most powerful tool, your mind. Here's your host, Certified Life Coach, Angela Kelly Robeck.

Hello, my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday and welcome to October, where Halloween is cancelled. I am thrilled to be offering this month's podcast theme for you. I cannot wait to share these concepts. I've got some amazing people lined up to speak with you on the podcast this month.

And we're going to be talking about a concept that's not typically discussed in education. In fact, the opposite concept tends to be the focus of our educational system and how we tend to approach the work and how we problem solve.

I have wanted to bring this topic up for so long in education, probably over 10 years. And finally, I've created this platform and this network of like-minded educators like yourselves, and fellow coaches out in the industry who are ready to open up this conversation and produce significant changes in the way that we lead and teach.

This month, we are going to explore abundant thinking and why shifting our focus towards sufficiency versus lack in all of the things that we don't have and how that is going to exponentially change the way that you feel and approach your work as a school leader and the way you experience your life on a day-to-day basis.

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This is something I have been exploring in my own life over the past few years, especially during the quarantine. When my brain wanted to go down the spiral of what wasn't going well and how bad things were, trust me, I've been on the slide.

You know chutes and ladders? I was on the big slide. But I'm climbing back up, I'm going up the chute. And I've been observing myself do this process of abundant thinking over the course of the year, and as I coach clients and I talk with my friends and family who are doing the same thing, it has become super clear to me that opening this discussion and sharing how to create a sense of sufficiency and enoughness for ourselves internally, in our personal life, professional life, so that we can create a climate of abundance with our school community, it's going to be a game-changer for schools, for education, for school leaders.

So what is abundant thinking? What do I mean by that? Abundant thinking means you are intentionally directing your thoughts towards the skills and resources you have available to you right now in this moment. It's like being on *Survivor* and you have to complete a task with only the tools and resources and energy and time that you are allotted. That's it, no more, no less.

You can't stop and be thinking about everything you don't have and what you wish you could buy and where you wish you were right now and how tired you are. You have to get into your brain and come up with a resourcefulness and an abundance and a sufficiency mindset in order to be able to tackle that skill. That's what abundant thinking is about.

It's reminding your brain that you have everything you need right now in this moment to lead your school, to make decisions, to follow a school budget, to build relationships, to hold conversations, even when they're

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tough, or to create work-life balance for yourself. It's choosing to focus on creating feelings of sufficiency and enoughness.

I love that word. Enoughness. I think I made it up. But you want to find evidence that there is enough time, money, resources, tools, skills, strategies, people, everything. There is enough of everything in this moment for yourself, even though your brain wants to constantly tell you that it is not enough, that you are in lack, that something's going to be taken away.

And if this concept sounds fluffy or frivolous or a waste of time for you, I invite you to keep an open mind. This shift in thinking impacts how you approach every single decision you make and every single action that you take. It truly is the difference between leading with confidence, clarity, certainty, and calmness, all four C's by the way, over leading out of fear, frustration, doubt, worry, all of the things.

It really is the difference between enjoying your career and your life, versus being filled with constant stress and anxiety day after day, year after year. When you're a new school leader, your brain is on constant guard. It's like walking through a haunted house for the first time.

It knows that there are unexpected scary things around the corner. I love this analogy. School leadership really is going into a haunted house. You don't know what's coming around the corner. You don't know when it's coming, you don't know how it's coming, you don't know what it will be.

But you do know that something's coming that's going to feel scary. It's going to generate an emotion inside of your body that you may not really like. I don't know about you, maybe you like to be afraid. I don't like to have somebody scare me. I don't like that feeling.

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So going into a haunted house is knowing you're going to be scared and as your body's anticipating the unknown, it kind of goes into this lockdown, right? It anticipates the fear. So it knows it's happening, it knows you're going to be afraid, it knows you're going to get spooked. And so the body is tense and it's waiting and it's looking all around. It's looking, looking, looking for the scary thing.

It knows that it doesn't know what's coming. So it's trying to get very prepared to protect you. That's the brain's job. It's scanning and seeking for the dangers to protect you. And it's constantly going to have you on edge with really high adrenaline rushing, real high cortisol rushing in your body because you're always on that edge of anticipation of the scare.

And when the zombie jumps out, your brain's going to say, see, I told you, this is a scary place, bad things happen here. We don't know what we're doing or what's going to happen or how to handle this, we need to be more prepared, we need to work harder, we need more, we need more time, we need more money, we need more resources, we need more to protect ourselves.

Or your brain's going to say, we got to get out of here, it's going to run away. That's that fight or flight syndrome that's happening. So even when you're in a situation like a haunted house where you know things are coming, you don't know when or how, or how often, or to what degree, you know it's coming, your brain is going to be scanning.

It's designed to protect you and keep you safe, so it's naturally looking for all of those dangers out there. And trust me, the more that it's out there looking, the more it's going to find.

The same is true for scarcity. It's constantly worried that things are going to run out. So your brain is always scanning and looking for situations where

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something isn't enough. It believes that the solution to the problem that you're trying to solve is more. You need more computers, more technology, more curriculum, more people, more teachers, more money, more time.

We think the solution to our overbooked schedule is more time. If we just had more time, then we could get it all done. If I just had more money, I could hire more people and buy more materials. If I just had more, fill in the blank, I would feel better, I would be a better leader. That's what's really going on here.

We think that more is going to solve the problem and that we will feel better when we have the more. Even in times when things are extraordinarily available and we're living high on the hog, we tend not to fully appreciate it because we're worried that at some point, things are going to dry up and we'll be right back to not having enough.

Our brain fears that what we do have will be taken away from us at some point in time. And that's really sad because we don't get to enjoy when we do have the abundance because our brain is focused on not having it later in the future or at some point in time.

Brené Brown calls this foreboding joy. We don't allow ourselves to feel the abundance in the moment because we're focused on some future moment when we're worried that we may no longer have it, so we don't experience the benefit, the joy, the pleasure of actually having it in the present moment. It's kind of crazy, right?

But this is where we have to step in and get very intentional. We have to be the adult for the part of our brain that wants to react and indulge in the drama of it all. Our brain defaults to focusing on either the past, looking back, or the present, looking forward.

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This is the reptilian part of our brain, and that's just the part of our brain that initiates fight, flight, or freeze. And we can't stop ourselves from reacting that way. You're not going to stop yourself from having that initial gut reaction. That's just how our bodies are designed for survival. That's not what you're trying to do is prevent that from happening.

What you're trying to do and the problem is that that part of our brain just can't decipher between the signals of real physical danger and the emotional dangers that we bring upon ourselves with our worrisome thoughts and our simulated situations, like a haunted house.

Your brain doesn't know the difference between the simulation and the real. And the fears that are imminent and the fears that are perceived way in the distance, way in the future. So that's why your brain responds in fear, that gut reaction. We react, but then we need to kick into our prefrontal cortex, which is the part of our brain that has evolved.

I call it the adult brain. It's the adult inside of us that tells us it's okay, you're not in danger, you're safe, you're going to be fine, we can fix this. There's a solution to everything. This is just pretend for fun.

So when you're in the haunted house, your brain gets the jolt, the anticipation of the fear, the jolt of the actual fear, and then your brain calms down. It's like, it's just for fun, this isn't real, we're just having a good time.

So as school leaders, when you go into school leadership, it can feel like a haunted house. You have to remind yourself that you aren't in true danger. So when your reptilian brain kicks in and you feel that fear and that worry and the doubt and concern and oh my gosh and the overwhelm and the lack and the scarcity, that's the signal, when you're flipping out like that and spinning to remind yourself, wait a minute, let's kick into my adult part of my brain, my prefrontal cortex and remind myself that yes, this does feel scary,

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but you can assure yourself you're going to be okay no matter what happens.

You can choose to remind yourself that this feels really scary, I'm allowing the fear, it's not going away, but I'm also comforting myself knowing, wait a minute, in this moment, I'm okay, in this moment, I'm safe, I'm fine, and even in the worst of situations, I'm going to figure out a solution. I will be okay.

You chose to step into school leadership knowing that it's new, knowing that it's different. Just like the haunted house, you choose to go into that haunted house knowing you're going to get scared. Knowing you won't know what to expect, other than the fact that it is designed to scare you.

School leadership is designed to scare you as well. Really, that is the purpose. You chose school leadership because it's new and it's different and it's exciting, but the reward of that choice is the bigger impact, the bigger benefit, the bigger legacy that you can create for yourself because you're willing to learn new things, to learn new experiences, to go through the scary haunted house of the unknown in order to develop your skills. That is the purpose.

So we go in knowing unexpected things will happen and that we're going to feel uncomfortable at times, but at the end of it all, we will still be okay. Intentionally practicing abundant thinking is the art of using fear as the signal that it's time to remind yourself to focus back on thoughts that bring you back to center.

Thoughts that feel stable, calm, certainty for you. And throughout this month, we're going to explore the ways to build your abundant thinking as it relates to time, money, resources, and resourcefulness as a leader, which



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really is just about how you use your brain to problem solve with what you already know and already have available to you.

I've got some great experts lined up for this month who specialize in money and resourcefulness mindset so they can help you shift from thinking that you don't have enough money, you don't have enough time, you don't have enough resources, all this don't have enough thinking, and we get into believing that you have the time, you have plenty of time, you have plenty of money, that you should invest in yourself, that you can create more than what your school pays for you, that you can overflow your life with gratitude and abundance, and that seeing the value and believing in your potential and tapping into your greatest knowledge and greatest strengths to solve any problem is how you become the most empowered version of yourself.

And hey, if you still aren't sold on abundant thinking, which I think I sold you pretty hard on, it's amazing. It's a game-changer. But if you're not sold, I invite you to consider this. When you're thinking thoughts like I can't keep up, I don't have time to, fill in the blank, there's not enough, fill in the blank, I don't have the money, I can't afford to, fill in the blank, or I don't know how to, when you have those thoughts that start with those sentences, how do you feel when you are thinking like this?

When you're thinking you don't have the time, you don't have the money, there's no way you can afford it, you don't have the resources, that there's lack, that you don't know how to do anything, you don't have the power within yourself, that's exhausting. It's exhausting to believe you'd never have enough.

Thinking about all you don't have and all that you still need impacts your energy level. And when your energy is low, you focus on what isn't working, versus generating solutions because you're too tired to think of solutions. And that creates the cycle of more problems and more lack.

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Abundant thinking generates energy. When you're thinking I've planned out my week, I know what the priorities are, I can focus on the one thing in front of me, I don't have to be overwhelmed, I have plenty of time and money, we have the resources we need, solutions are within me, what needs to get done will get done, whatever I do today is enough, that's a great thought for me.

Whatever I get done today was enough, it was what was meant to be. I plan it out, I act accordingly, and even when I don't fulfill that schedule or get to everything, I can know with abundance that what got done needed to get done. These thoughts create an energy that's exciting and motivating.

You feel confident knowing you've prioritized and planned your week. You don't feel rushed because you know there's plenty of time and that what gets done gets done. You won't stress about money because you believe that you will always have enough and be enough.

And you won't blame a lack of resources as the reason to why you can't solve a problem because you're going to believe that you have everything you need to come up with a solution. Abundant thinking isn't just positive mantras. It's not repeating a thought in your mind that you don't really believe is true. It's believing with your body and your soul that no matter what, you always have exactly what you need.

You have the right amount of time, you have the right amount of money, you have the resourcefulness to solve problems and generate solutions. You also have the capacity to experience the emotions that come with abundance. When there's no emotion that you're not afraid to feel, you are going to have a more abundant life overall.

I cannot wait to share all of the abundant thoughts and resources we have available for you this month. If you sign up for coaching, you will have

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access to all of my workbooks, all of the resources available to the Empowered Principal network.

So I want you to practice the following thoughts this week and look for ways that these statements are true for you. I have everything I need in this moment. The amount I get done today is enough. Solutions are within me. Practice these thoughts. Have an empowered week. I'll talk with you next week. Take care.

If this podcast resonates with you, you have to sign up for the Empowered Principal coaching program. It's my exclusive one-to-one coaching and mentorship program for school leaders who believe in possibility. This program is designed for principals who are hungry for the fastest transformation in the industry.

If you want to create the best connections, impact, and legacy for yourself and your school, the Empowered Principal program was designed for you. Join me at [angelakellycoaching.com/work-with-me](https://angelakellycoaching.com/work-with-me) to learn more. I'd love to support you in becoming an empowered school leader.

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](https://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.