

## Ep #146: Time Abundance



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

## Ep #146: Time Abundance

Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 146.

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. How are you doing? Thinking about you. I hope that you are enjoying this fall season. I have been making a point to put out a few fall decorations and some autumn scented candles in my house. Because I have to remind my brain that it is now an entirely new season.

When quarantine first started, it was the beginning of spring. And my husband and I told ourselves after a few weeks, it was like, wait a minute, we have to write off this season because we realized after time was marching on, we were not going to be able to do all of the things that we had planned for spring.

We were going to go up to my in-laws' brand-new home that they just built. Their kind of retirement home and go there for Easter. And we were planning on graduations and birthday celebrations. None of that happened. And then summer rolls around and we had to let go of vacations and beach days and barbecues with family and friends.

And then when school started and September blew by, it blew my mind. I told my husband, I have to do something to wrap my brain around this year. And I love the seasons. I love them all so much. And I love all of the things that come with each season. Fall has to be one of my favorites, although to be honest, I love all the seasons and all the things that come with them.

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But fall is my favorite because of the excitement and the association I have with the start of a new school year. I always feel like it's a new beginning, it's a fresh start. It's almost like a New Year's Eve kind of feeling for me as it relates to the school year.

And of course I love all the things. Pumpkins and apple orchards and all of that. But I really do love fall. So I had to ground myself and put some physical evidence in my house to ensure my brain that yes, it is indeed fall. It is already October. I can't believe it. And that this year's going to be a write off in terms of the seasons and getting together.

So anyway, I just hope you're doing well out there. I hope you're doing emotionally well and mentally well and that you are doing something that grounds you in the sense of the joy of each season, the joy of this time of year, and I know you are back in the swing of school to some capacity. Every school is different, every client that I work with has a different situation going on.

But I just hope that you are able to find a way to embrace the season and take some time to create some joy for yourself, even when you can't do the things that you normally do, or normally want to do during this time. So I encourage you to find ways to love life and to practice abundance in as many ways as possible.

And speaking of abundance, let's talk about it. This month, we've dedicated to building our capacity to think more abundantly about our top three assets, which is our time, our money, and our brain. Last week, I gave an overview of what abundant thinking is and what's going on in your mind and how to actively seek out abundance and practice believing in it, and that doing so will create a sense of energy for you.

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So practicing believing in abundance creates energy. Think about this. Athletes use their abundant thinking to create physical energy. And I know they definitely workout obviously, which goes a long way, but they also expand their energy with their minds.

And if you don't believe me, you have to watch The Last Dance to see this in full action. It's the story of Michael Jordan and the championship run of the Chicago Bulls during the 80s and 90s. Now, I'm fascinated with it because one, I grew up in that era, and two, my family was a huge Chicago Bulls fan.

We all were fans, my dad especially. That's who I'm thinking about. But we were obsessed with the Chicago Bulls and how amazing they were and how talented and gifted they were in their sport and just how dedicated and committed they were. It's fascinating.

So going back and watching The Last Dance for me was absolutely incredible. I'm so obsessed with it. I've already watched it once. I want to watch it again. Because I love the story behind the story. Michael Jordan had an amazing ability to manage his mind and create successful results by fully believing that winning is in abundance. That there were plenty of opportunities to win and that winning was the solution.

He didn't focus on the losses. He had them. He wasn't afraid of them, but he counted the wins. He focused his brain on the abundance of the wins. He wasn't concerned by the failures. He kept his focus on all of the wins. He had to mentally decide to focus on what was working and what felt good versus all the fears about losing and failing.

He had to focus on the possibility of winning. And this is the same practice that we're going to implement as we create more abundant thoughts as

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school leaders around our time, the resources we have, and our brains' resourcefulness.

Today, we're going to specifically talk about how to build your relationship with time and to create time and believe that time is abundant, versus trying to control it and manage it because you believe it's scarce and that there's not enough time.

So why spend our time focusing on abundant thoughts? Why are we doing this? It feels like what we should be talking about is how to do better, do differently, just tell me what to do with my schedule, what to do with my time, and I will check the box and make it better. That's what our brain wants.

It wants the answer to be in the action that we take. We think that taking different action is going to result in us thinking differently about our time. We'll do something different and then we'll see a different result and we'll be like, oh, I guess time is abundant, that's cool.

No, it doesn't work that way. It's the opposite. And I know this is such a deeply rooted belief for most people, especially leaders like you and I, who are very action-oriented. We want someone just to tell us what to do or how to do something differently, and we will check the box and apply that action. Kind of like a robot. Just tell me what to do and I will do it.

We think that being told what to do and how to do it and sometimes we think that if we just had this tool or just this resource or this book or this planner or this kind of calendar system, that then time will feel abundant and that we will have plenty of time to get it all done.

I want to emphasize something that's going to be a game-changer for you when it comes to your time. You are going to think that having a certain

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calendar or a schedule or a planner, so something out there or some system, you think that this is the answer to managing your time, or you think that just packing your schedule with more, giving certain tasks less time and then putting more tasks on the calendar, you think that is the solution to creating more time, to having more time, or to getting more done.

I want to save you years of your time and your energy by telling you directly right now that none of that is the answer. It's not the calendar you use. It's not the planner you choose. Those are simply tools. They don't change the way you think about time. They don't change the way that you plan and approach your week.

In order to feel that you have an abundance of time, you must become aware of the thoughts you currently believe about your time and your schedule. Then you must be willing to challenge those thoughts if they aren't beliefs that are creating the result you want for your time.

So if you're happy with the way you spend your time, and I mean all of it, your personal time, your professional time, if you're happy with your life in terms of time and you feel like you have an abundance of time, then by all means, you're doing it right for yourself.

There's no one right way to create a schedule, but if you feel time abundant and you feel like it's working for you, then you're good to go. But if you're like most people and especially brand new school leaders out there, if you're feeling overwhelm or consumed with work and you don't feel like you have control over your time or the balance you want in your life, then you have to start by understanding that your thoughts are what's driving these results that you currently have, which is overwhelm, confusion, exhaustion, disappointment, discouragement, all of it.

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All of those emotions that you feel, or the lack of getting things done, or the result of working too much time, overworking, any action that you take and any result that you have is always being driven by what you're thinking. Let me break this down so your brain can wrap around this idea that your thoughts on your time and the way that you think about your time and whether time is scarce or abundant is the actual root of the problem. But it's also the solution that you're seeking.

I'm going to focus on how you feel, that core emotion of overwhelm and exhaustion, those kind of feelings, I want to focus on the emotions that come up when you're thinking scarce thoughts because your emotions are typically the first signal that you have that indicate to you when you're thinking something that is out of alignment for you in sense of time.

When you're feeling overwhelm, confusion, exhaustion, frustration, you're feeling like you're not keeping up, you're not getting to things, and you have to overwork when you have those emotions and those results in your life, that's a signal to indicate that you're having thoughts about your time, about yourself, about what you should be doing that is out of alignment of the reality of your job and your life.

So Byron Katie says that any thought that feels terrible is a lie. And I love this. And the way that I interpret this is that any thought that doesn't feel good, any time you have a really intense negative reaction means that you're having a thought that is out of alignment with your values, your desires, or your expectations.

So let me give you an example in the form of a very common first-year leader emotion. Every new leader I coach feels overwhelm at some point and in some capacity. Some feel it on the regular. Some feel anxious and highly stressed and overwhelmed all of the time. Other people feel it kind of in peaks. It comes in waves.

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Now, the thoughts that create that overwhelm will vary from one leader to another. Some feel overwhelmed by the amount of emails they have; they can't keep up with emails. Other people feel really stressed about the number of staff members that they need to connect with and observe and oversee and evaluate.

Some people feel just sheer overwhelm by the amount of work that they have to do and how much more time they're spending at work. But the overarching thought is there's too much to do and not enough time. And that thought is being driven by the belief - and I want you to hear this - I'm supposed to get this all done. I need to keep up. It's my job, it's my responsibility. I have to do all of this.

You have a belief system that brings up the thought there's too much to do and not enough time. But that's being driven by a belief system, a value that it's your responsibility to get it all done. You believe to your core that it's your job to do everything on that to-do list and to do whatever people ask you to do and to be available 24/7. You have the list of all the things, so of course it's easy to see why you, as a new principal, think the thought there's too much to do and not enough time.

In your credential training, you have been taught to believe this. You've been taught to include all stakeholders in decisions, to build relationship with all members of your team and your students and your families, to be seen on campus and in classrooms, to be timely in your correspondence, to not miss deadlines, be prepared for all the meetings, be the instructional leader, and not to mention, be the site manager and the visionary leader and the budget.

You're supposed to do all of it. I could list 50 things that you are told to do and be as a principal. And as good students who want to do it right, you



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buy into believing that you should be able to do it all. You think that that's what being a good leader means, and that's what it looks like.

We also believe that people we view as good leaders have it all together and under control. So there's you thinking that you should be like that, and then you're looking out to the people that you admire and respect and you're thinking to yourself, "Wow, they've got it all pulled together. That principal knows what she's doing. She runs a tight ship. She knows all of the things. She knows everything about instructional leadership, she knows how to deal with her staff and her parents and her community, she knows everything."

We kind of put these people on a pedestal, and then we feel like, completely inadequate. So we think of leaders that we admire, and we imagine them never feeling overwhelmed. So this series of thoughts, it's my job to get this all done, I need to keep up, I'm responsible for all of this, good leaders do it all, I want to be a good leader, combined with the thoughts - kind of the opposite thoughts - wow, what just happened to my world?

This is a lot, there's so much to do, I can't seem to get it all done, I'm trying to get it done during my workday, it's not working, things keep coming up, I keep getting interrupted, I never get to what really matters, I should be getting more done, I need to keep up, I need to work more. It just happens so quickly.

These two sets of thoughts, this kind of opposing thought systems, they create cognitive dissonance in your mind. You have two sets of values. You value being an excellent leader, and your expectations of who you think you should be as a leader, versus the reality of what you're actually getting done, it doesn't align.

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And when those two things collide and they don't align, that creates overwhelm. You have a desire to keep up and you also have a desire not to die. You have a desire not to work 24/7 and run yourself into the ground. Those two values or those two desires, they don't mesh. Your expectation and your desire for balance doesn't mesh and it creates overwhelm.

So what happens? Our brain, in its effort to problem solve and get us out of the pain of overwhelm does one of two things. It tries to meet the expectation, or it gives into the overwhelm. So you either try to jam more into your day and you either try to give every task you have a lot less time, which means it's going to be less efficient, less effective, less productive, and you try to jam a lot more in to the point you're just numb.

You're just going through the motions of checking off the boxes and you get to a point of pure exhaustion, or you subconsciously shut down. You spin out in overwhelm. So basically you feel stuck, like you're chasing your tail, and you completely shut down and you give in.

And I said a subconscious level. Typically when this happens, you don't even realize it but you're feeling apathetic, you're feeling super inadequate, why even try, you take days off because you're so tired, or you just can't bear the thought of going in.

The result of either of these approaches creates more overwhelm. We either burn out from working so much, or we create more to do by not tackling those things one thing at a time. Or we just kind of avoid working altogether, which of course, work is still there when you're avoiding it. It's waiting for you.

So none of these approaches help you reduce overwhelm. They actually generate more. When you attach to these belief systems, there is no planner or calendar system that's going to help you. You're just going to

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add more to the planner and still feel overwhelmed, or you going to end up not using the planner because now you feel really overwhelmed because it's one more thing to do, which is doing all the planning.

And when you write it all down and see how much is in front of you, it just makes your head explode. There's just too much to do. It's because you already believe there's too much to do. Your brain is seeking evidence to prove to you there's too much to do and not enough time. I have to work more, now I'm exhausted, then I go into exhaustion mode and I don't want to work, therefore there's more work to be done because I've avoided it. What do we do?

The problem isn't in what you do to plan. The problem is that you see time as scarce. So no matter what system you use, your brain is going to continue to prove to you that there isn't enough time. And the longer you believe that there isn't enough time, the more evidence you will have to prove yourself true.

And the more you do that, the harder it is to believe that time is in fact completely abundant. And that the way you spend your time is perfectly okay. I want to offer you something. I want you to consider accepting what is. This is another strategy I teach my clients.

So I have a client who's been really frustrated that she's not been able to feel productive, to be productive. She feels like that she completes a task or a plan and then the district changes everything. Everything from the start date of school to what student learning will take place, and to where students are going to learn.

They're a mess. They have no idea; they keep changing the plan. And she's a brand-new leader. She wants to be out supporting her staff, being with teachers. She doesn't want to be stuck in her office revising plans and

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spreadsheets. So instead of using her time to be out with the people and meeting people and supporting teachers with the start of the year, she's been kind of stuck revising and revising and revising the class placement spreadsheets.

So her brain started arguing with the reality of what she was being asked to do. She wanted to be doing other things, and she expected that her first year was going to be about being with the people, building relationships, getting to know people, getting people to know who she is so they can build a bond and they can like her and trust her and be willing to follow her lead.

But the reality is right now at this moment in time, she's doing spreadsheets. Not what she wants to do. So what I offered her was lean into the reality of what is. Believe that what you are doing right now is what you actually should be doing in the moment.

Is it what you expected? No. But it is the reality, and it's okay to accept that that's just where you're at right now and allow it to be what is. There's so much peace in that.

Number two, you can also while you're accepting what is, it doesn't mean you have to succumb to it. It doesn't mean that all of your time has to go to the thing and the expectations that you don't want. You can create your own desires and your own expectations and create some time in your day to do the things that you feel most strongly about.

So if you highly value connection time with your teachers, you can decide to give yourself 30 minutes of your day to that one thing you are craving to do. Set aside 30 minutes to go visit with your teachers or check in with kids or do whatever that feels like you should be doing it and that you're not getting to it, or something you just miss doing.

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You can just desire it for the sake of it filling your bucket. It's okay. I promise you, no one else is going to be filling your bucket. No one's going to put fill the principal's bucket on their calendar. They're not going to do that. You have to put it on your own calendar.

So give yourself the benefit and the grace of 30 minutes to fill your own bucket. Go do the thing. 30 minutes a day is not going to make or break that spreadsheet that you're spending the other two or three or four hours on.

Finally, I want to talk about selling yourself on the abundance of time. When you decide to create more time, you're going to have to sell your brain on these new ideas. You have to seek out examples of how time is forever abundant and that you do actually have so much more control over your time that you're choosing to believe.

First of all, I want to ask you, when you think you don't have enough time and there's too much to do and not enough time, ask yourself why you're choosing to believe that. How does that support you? How does it benefit you? How does it serve you? How does it serve your school and your kids and your staff?

Think about what you're thinking. Notice how the current thinking is not working. Believing this story of too much to do, not enough time, scarcity of time and that you - and that whole belief system of I should be getting to it, I should be doing all the things, it's my job, it's my responsibility, buying into all those beliefs is not working for you.

Look at it. Get real with yourself. What result is it actually creating in your life? If you have these thoughts, like you feel like you never have enough time or you don't feel like you get enough done, if you feel like there's just no finish line, if your health, your wellbeing, your relationships are being

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impacted, if you feel like you're missing out on the most important parts of your life because you are overworking, because you believe you have to, if you're not the best version of yourself as a school leader because you're always rushing around, you're making mistakes, you're running from here to there, you're missing out on things, you're not creating your best work, you're not being your best leader.

If all of those results are happening, the thoughts you're thinking are not working. Get real with yourself. Try to believe that something else is possible. You might as well try, right? The scarcity thoughts obviously aren't the solution. You've tried them. You've been running around for years thinking you don't have enough time. It doesn't hurt to give the opposite a try.

So I ask you this, how would you benefit from believing that time is abundant? How would you and your teachers and your family benefit? Think of all the ways that you actually do believe that time is abundant. What do you already know about time? How do you create time? How do you have control over your time?

Have you ever in your life experienced a time where you felt like you had plenty of time? You had a luxurious amount of time? What did that feel like, to think that you have enough time? The key here is to actively practice time abundance.

This is something I for sure have been doing with myself because I'll tell you what, there's nothing but time lately, right? 2020 has shown us there's nothing but time. We have a lot of time on our hands. We have nothing but time, and so it's fun to play with these ideas around time.

And the only way you're ever going to feel like you have enough time to live a balanced life, to get the work done, to just decide right now that you've

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done enough, you've been enough, that you can close the computer and go be with your friends and family for the night, the only way to actually live that life is to actively practice time abundance.

If there's one thing to take away from this, it's that when you do decide to invite the idea that it could be your time thoughts and you decide to practice or surrender to shifting those thoughts and creating more abundant thinking about time, what's going to happen is it will start to magically feel like you have so much more time. And you seem to get everything done in the amount of time you've given it.

So yes, there is a component here where you do have to do the math. You have to prioritize your schedule, decide what you're going to do, what you're going to delegate, what you're not going to do, put it on your calendar, give it a finite amount of time, and then honor that calendar to the best of your ability.

You're going to do the math of all of that. But then you actually have to allow for a little bit of magic to take place. You have to lean into the belief and trust that time is abundant and allow the universe to help you out just a little bit. You don't have to control it all and do it all. Know that the universe will have your back as you've heard when you choose to believe.

Practice time abundance this week. Think of all the ways that time is abundant. You have plenty of time. And how it'll benefit you to think about time in an abundant way and know that the old way isn't working. Go have an empowered week. I'll talk to you next week, take care. Bye.

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