

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 149.

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, my empowered leaders, here we are. It's November. And today is election day 2020. All I can say is what a ride and what a year. We've all been hanging on with both hands screaming all the way through 2020. That's how I feel. Both metaphorically and at times, literally, which is why I've spent so much time intentionally choosing to focus on enoughness and abundance.

Giving our brain balance to all the unknown is essential for our mental and our emotional wellbeing. I have had to actively schedule time to think about the good in the world and in our lives. I have to allow my brain time to focus on the 50/50 of being human and the 50/50 of the world and give it space to remember that the 50% out there is sufficient, is happy, is grounded.

Otherwise, the other half consumes all of me and all of my brain time and it takes away our thoughts and our energy. I want this podcast, the time you spend listening to this podcast to be that time in your day where you put down the exhaustive pressures and the exhaustive thinking and focus your brain on possibility and hope and positivity and resourcefulness.

And hey, by the way, be sure to recommend this podcast to your colleagues and spread the love. We can't be keeping all of this goodness to ourselves. And I like to look at it this way. When you share this podcast with the people you're working with and you tell them about it, they might actually listen, first of all, which would be amazing.

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

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

But when you tell even your boss, or your district admin or whoever, whoever you're working with, when you share that you're listening to this podcast and that it's helping you, they start to listen, and for some of them, this will be their flavor and they will love it. For others it won't be, and that's fine.

But for those who do need the support, want the connection, want to talk about education and the mental and emotional wellbeing of our leaders, what will happen is they'll start to understand and gain insight into their own STEAR cycles, which could ultimately result in positively impacting you and the way you work with them.

Because once they understand the STEAR cycle, then they will start to become aware of their thoughts and emotions and the way they're approaching you and their work. And it could positively have a benefit for you. So share the love, spread the love.

I know my clients have started to share this work with their teammates and their teaching staff. And it has had quite a positive ripple effect throughout their district. So keep on, my friends. Hang in there. Happy November, happy election day. May your voting have mattered.

Okay, on to this month. This month is going to be so good. The content I'm creating is just getting more powerful every month, and really, it's a result of going through my own massive growth personally and professionally, and just working with clients and observing the growth through all of my clients.

My clients are getting faster results. I'm seeing people implement these concepts at record speed and as a result, getting record results in record time. It's just blowing my mind. They're saying yes to coaching without question, they're cleaning up their brain, they're all in 100%, and that attitude, that mindset, and that determination and commitment to

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

themselves and their ability to lead and their self-concept as a leader and their willingness to do this work in their brains so they can then transform their school into expedited transformation, that commitment I've seen tenfold this year. It's so incredible.

Our brains are kind of like our homes. There are closets in our brain that are full of outdated thoughts and belief systems that no longer serve us. We don't even use them. We're not even aware that they're in there, but they're in there weighing us down, clogging up our space in our home.

It's the same thing. We have old thoughts and old belief systems that are clogging us up. So every time we open the door to that closet, we slam it shut and we're like, ugh, that's ugly, I don't want to deal with that. Because we think that it's going to be too much work, too hard, too challenging, too time consuming, too overwhelming, whatever.

But when we do finally make the decision to dedicate an hour to start organizing that one closet, we realize it's not so bad. It's not as bad as we thought it would be. So we start by just taking one shelf and one box at a time. And we go through it a little bit at a time, one box at a time, one item at a time. And we decide very intentionally, each item, do we keep it or chuck it? What's the decision?

And sometimes that decision feels very overwhelming, there's a lot of attachment to that item. Other times, because you haven't thought about it for so long, you're like, why did I even keep this? And you're just happily throwing it out. You don't even care.

And at first, when we first enter into that closet and there's all these things, it feels very overwhelming, it feels like we can't possibly get through it, it's going to take so much work and time, so when we do this work, we do a little tiny bit at a time. And the more you do it, the less difficult it feels, the

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

less tedious it feels, and it actually becomes faster and easier to let go of things that we don't want or need.

That detachment sets in. Like wait a minute, I'm not using this, I no longer need it, I'd rather have the space in my closet, I'd rather have an organized, clean closet than keep this item that I never use. So the more we do this, the faster and easier it feels to let things go that you don't want or you don't need.

And as that momentum builds, it feels really good. And then your brain shifts into wanting to clean the closet and looking forward to cleaning the closet. And then relishing in your accomplishment when it's done. And the end result is that you feel so much freedom. You feel so light and free because you've consciously decided what stays because you need it and what goes because you don't.

And then you have space, you have clarity, you have cleanliness, everything has a place, there's enough room. Maybe there's an abundance of space in your closet now. Maybe you have empty shelving in the closet. How amazing would that be, right?

So what I find for myself is that after I do this work, I'm so amazed, I'm so happy, I feel so good, and I'm thinking to myself, "Why did I wait so long? Why didn't I just dig in and do that months ago?" Well, why did we do this? We waited because the thoughts that we had beforehand were obstacles.

I don't want to, this is going to be hard, this will take forever, it's boring, it's overwhelming, it's tedious. So those thoughts stopped us from taking action. And then there's a moment of decision where we're like, nope, I'm committing, I'm going all in, I'm getting in that closet, I'm just going to clean one shelf per day until it's done.

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

And then as we get started, our thoughts start to shift a little bit more and a little bit more, and you take off one item at a time, and that momentum fuels your energy. And then you get excited and you start to shift into seeing the progress. And now our thoughts are fueled by that success.

And then our thoughts shift to this is working, I see progress, I like the results, I can do this, it's not that big of a deal, I'm getting closer. And then we get to the end and it's finally cleaned out and organized, and we are so proud, so confident, so assured that this was the best decision we ever made. That's the same thing with our brain.

We're not arguing with ourselves anymore because we just know that it's already done, we're going to finish no matter what. And this is what I want to talk with you about today. This process is going to kick off this month's theme.

This month's theme is when you're new. All of us are new at something. We're new to living and working through a pandemic. We're new to shifting to remote learning or hybrid learning or back to in-person learning. Many of you listeners are new at school leadership. This is your first, second, or third year.

Others of you are new at clarifying your leadership values or defining your future goals. Some of you are new at determining your legacy. You've been a leader for a while, but you haven't really sat down to think about what's the legacy I want to leave behind.

So we're all new at something. So this month, we're going to focus on how we approach something from the state of being new, the stages we go through when we're new, and how to approach the most common fears that come with being new.

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

So today, we're going to focus on your self-concept as a leader and the self-concept evolution that's required when you step from being a teacher into being a principal. When you first transitioned from your role as a teacher into the role of a principal, you made a huge jump in your career.

Now, you've done the work that allowed you to meet the requirements of getting hired as a principal. So you've jumped through some hoops already. You've excelled as a teacher; you've probably taken on teacher leader roles. You've taken coursework or tests, or you've somehow obtained your admin credential.

Some of you went maybe to graduate school or you jumped through whatever hoops you had to go through to get where you are today. So congratulations on that. I want you to acknowledge the work you've done to get you where you're at right now.

So through that process, you have evolved your self-concept into not thinking you could be a leader into thinking you could be a leader. But now that you've landed the job, what happened is your title and status and role instantly jumped up from that teacher status up to principal status.

The expectations placed on you have expanded tremendously in one moment's time. From not being the leader to signing the documents and being the leader. And the role has changed tremendously. Yet you, the person with the title, status, and role, you're still you.

You're still the teacher who's just landed the job as a new principal. So you personally haven't changed yet, even though your role, status, and title have changed. So the concept of who you are and what you're capable of has not evolved at the same rate as the change in your status, title, and your role, your position.

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

The position changes in a moment, but who you believe you are, your self-concept of who you are as an educator has to catch up. It hasn't evolved at the same rate. So before you were actually in the position, you had thoughts and emotions about the job.

These are future-forward thoughts. Those are just thoughts that you think about in your present moment about the future. They're things like, when I'm a principal I will think this, or when I'm a principal I will feel this, or when I'm a principal I'm going to do this, or I'm going to create this result.

It's that dreamy part. You have thoughts about what you anticipate or expect are going to happen once you get there. So your emotions are really high. This is a fun time of the transition. You're excited, you're enthused, you're thinking about possibility. Your thoughts are very visionary and dreamy.

You had these ideas of who you're going to become and how you're going to do it and all you're going to change and how you're going to interact and the kind of boss you want to be. And this is a great place to be because those thoughts and emotions are what give you the courage to actually accept that role as school leader.

Your concept of yourself as a school leader at this stage is very positive. So you imagine yourself fitting perfectly into the role. Now, that's the before stage. Then we get to the during stage. The during stage is when you transition into actually being in the role.

This is where cognitive dissonance sets in. There's the way you thought it would be, and then there's the way that it is. Your expectations and the realities of the job don't align, and that's very painful. Overwhelm, confusion, conflict, doubts, fears all bubble to the surface.

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

And this happens because what we believe about ourselves and our ability, that's our self-concept as a leader, that hasn't caught up with our new role and responsibilities. Our belief in ourself as a leader isn't equal to our reality that we are in fact a leader.

So before we were actually doing the job, we kind of believed that we had the skills and capability and we imagined ourselves handling it all. But now that we're in it, we no longer believe that's true. We doubt and question ourselves, we spin in confusion and overwhelm, we underestimate the amount of effort required to step into the position and to learn that skillset of being a leader and handling what it is to be a leader.

So some of those first-year self-concept thoughts, I don't know what I'm doing, I can't make decisions on my own, I need to check in with other people, I need to come across as competent. That whole fake it 'til you make it attitude or mentality. I don't want to be seen as weak or incompetent, even though I believe I am weak or incompetent. But I don't want to be seen. I have to be strong. I have to fake it 'til I make it.

Other things you think, I don't know my values and opinions, I'm not sure what to do, I'm uncertain. Who am I to be a leader? You've got the fraud complex going on. And the other one is I need to figure it all out to have a successful year. There is a belief system that involves having to know it all, do it all, and do it right your first time around.

And then finally, that little sneaker of a thought, I'm worried what people will say, do think, all of the things. All the judgments. We worry about the judgments. And that's the reality of our first-year concept. We want to believe that we're going to be competent. We get in it and we're not, so there's a gap.

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

So the self-concept gap is what you believe about yourself right now in this moment versus what you want to believe about yourself, or what beliefs you think would make you a confident and competent leader. So this first year is going to involve evolving your self-concept.

So what you have to do is get very honest with yourself about what you believe about yourself right now. Don't lie to yourself. What do you believe is true about you as a leader? What do you believe you know? What are you capable of? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What do you believe about your ability to lead?

Be willing to experience the discomfort of the gap, of not knowing fully who you are and who you want to be, and kind of swimming in the uncertainty of the gap. You're going to have to experience lots of courage, lots of commitment, lots of doubt and fear. It's all part of the package.

But when you allow it, when you're like, oh, this is the part where I thought I was going to know what I'm doing and I totally don't, I'm going to feel the burn, it's okay. Then you have to focus on not just where you're at, but you need to direct your thoughts on where you want to be. Focusing on what you want to be thinking and feeling about yourself.

What does a competent and confident leader think and feel? How does he approach his workweek? What decisions does she make and how does she solve problems? What results do they know they can create for themselves and their schools?

You want to try and imagine what a person who has what you want is thinking, feeling, and doing. That's how you evolve your concept. And look, this happens over time. You can expedite your transformation and stepping into that self-concept by actively working on the thoughts you think regularly and shifting your thoughts to much more empowering ones.

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

But I caution you, trying to convince yourself, like forcing yourself to believe something that you don't really believe, it's not a productive way to spend your time and it's not a productive way to self-coach. Being willing to go through the process just like cleaning the closet, slowly, methodically, one item at a time, one thought at a time, one intention at a time, and actively asking yourself, is this thought serving me or not? Is this a belief system that is growing me and evolving my self-concept or not?

So being willing to go through that process slowly and methodically and noticing how over the course of time, experience does help you evolve your self-concept, you will feel better about yourself after the end of your first year than you do at the beginning. I guarantee you that.

But I also want you to know that you can expedite and actively focus your thoughts and belief systems on all the ways that you are already a confident leader, all the ways you are already learning and growing and evolving. And that helps you step into your new role and close that gap of self-concept much more quickly.

I want you to know what you're going through is normal. Whether you're a first year, second year, third year leader, whether you're a veteran leader who's looking at COVID as a brand - you feel like you're brand new, any of it. Any time you're new, it's normal.

This is part of the process of evolving your self-concept of who you are. And I promise you this; it's not going to end after your first year. Being new is a prolonged process in some ways. It's a blessing and a struggle. There's always going to be new things coming up for you.

So even as a veteran principal, there were brand new situations coming up and I'm like, never saw this coming, don't know what to do, yes, this is my

Ep #149: Self-Concept Evolution

sixth year and I still don't know. You will always experience new unless you choose to completely stay in a comfort zone and stagnate yourself.

Don't do that. You're in a leadership position. You are an evolved human. You have the capacity to evolve your self-concept. So although there will be new things coming up for you, know that you're going through completely normal feelings, completely normal thoughts and struggles. It's all okay. I've got your back. We're here this month to talk about it.

We're going to talk about how to embrace being new and how to use it to your benefit and facilitate your leadership development. I love you guys. Have an amazing empowered week and I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

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 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 where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.