

## Ep #155: Getting to Know Yourself Personally



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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

## Ep #155: Getting to Know Yourself Personally

Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 155.

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 if you're new to the podcast, welcome. We are so happy to have you here with us today. Thanks for tuning in.

What I want to say is you have almost made it to the finish line. The end of 2020 is in sight. And this might be your last week of instruction depending on your break schedule for the year. So, some folks have just a few more days to go. Others of you might have a few more days into next week.

But I want to assure you, you've got this, my friends. 2020 is coming to a close. It's been a wild ride, but you have made it. I'm so proud of you and I'm so honored to be with you each week on the podcast, helping you get through this wild year in school leadership.

I want to remind you and ask you to be sure to plan out your holiday break. I want you to intentionally design your break the way that you want to experience it. So, you don't have to spend tons of time doing this. You can simply just highlight the top three things you want to experience while you are on your break.

So, take a moment to just write them down and consciously decide how you want to spend your time. Even if what you want is to have no agenda, to be able to do whatever you want with the day, decide that ahead of time. Don't let that be a result of unintentional planning on your part. Let yourself

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pre-decide that I'm going to just wake up when I want and do what I want with my day. I'm going to let my spirit just have at it.

But decide that ahead of time because what happens is, when you intentionally decide that you're going to spend your break letting your heart do whatever it wants to in that moment, you can feel really good knowing that that's what you planned to do. You want to have unstructured time.

You're deciding ahead of time to have that unstructured time versus not planning ahead, not really having any idea of what you want. You know you want to get some rest. You know you want to not be working. You know you want to spend time with your family or your kids or your partner or spouse, or I don't know, it's really hard to say this year what we're going to be able to do in terms of spending time with other humans. But what you can do is make the best of this break, regardless of what restrictions might be in place at the time the holidays roll around. So, decide that ahead of time.

I did this just this past weekend and it was very powerful for me. So, I'm going to share with you my experience of what happened. So, a close friend of mine is dealing with some medical issues. Some pretty significant medical issues. And I wanted to give her a boost. She was feeling really down and out about what was going on.

She was feeling pretty isolated with all this quarantine and shelter in place and with things getting worse. And she's a little bit older. She was feeling really disappointed and just kind of bummed out that she couldn't be doing her regular thing.

So, I decided ahead of time, in listening to her and talking with her on the phone that I was going to go and spend time with her in person. So, I

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quarantined. I did all of the things to make sure I was COVID-free and I planned and prepared the weekend in my mind ahead of time.

I planned food for her. I prepared meals. I told myself when I got there that it was going to be all about her, not about me. No agenda on my part. Simply to spend time with her, be very present, to not think about work, to not think about my business, to not let that urge creep in to kind of find these little seconds of time to sneak in social media or writing the podcast, this exact podcast. I had that urge to write this podcast.

So, I decided ahead of time, I was going to allow the weekend to be how it was going to be. Absolutely no working, no social media. I wanted the weekend to involve coffee chats in the morning with my friend. She loves to play cards, so I wanted to spend the afternoons playing cards with her. I knew she would want to go to bed early.

So, I anticipated how the weekend would go, but I decided ahead of time that I was going to let it just be as it was and that I was not going to let business or work get into my weekend space. I wanted to be very present with her and do whatever she wanted to do with no agenda on my end.

And I know this sounds like an easy thing to do. But if you're like me, it's actually much harder to turn your brain off of work than it sounds. I really struggle with this. And this is why I study myself so deeply and I notice what's happening, because I know it's happening in your minds as well.

So, I was very intentional about my plan for the weekend, which was no plan, right? So, when I got up there to her home and surprised her – she had no idea I was coming – we had the best time. She was so, so grateful that I showed up.

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And we chatted the night away. And I woke up the next morning to the most gorgeous sunrise and gorgeous view out of the bedroom window. And I felt this urge to get up early and jump onto my computer and write this podcast. It was the first thing my brain wanted to do.

I was like, I feel really refreshed. I feel super-energized. I'm a morning person anyway. But I was so excited to be there and I was just loving the scenery and loving being up there. I was in Tahoe. And I felt really motivated and compelled to write the podcast in that state of mind, in that energy.

And something I realized I have been doing over the past few years as a coach is that I've trained my brain to constantly think about my clients. And I love that I've trained myself to do this. I'm always thinking about what can I share with clients and listeners of the podcast to help all of you create bigger, better results for yourself in less time.

I'm studying myself. I'm studying my life. I'm studying how I was as a leader and I'm always asking myself, what can I share with my clients and my listeners that will help them right now today in this moment. Not in a month from now. Not in a year from now. But right now.

How do I inspire my principals to have mornings just like this? I want each and every one of you to love your work and to have a life outside of school leadership. I want you to be more connected with yourselves than ever so that you don't miss out on living life. I want this for myself and I want it for each of you.

So, as I was gazing out the window that morning and I was taking in all of the beauty, I caught myself wanting to grab that laptop and start typing. It's so sneaky, our brains. It feels so innocent and it feels so natural. But I caught myself and I told myself no, love, not today. Today, you're just going

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to take all of this in. Your message to your clients will be ready for you to share with them on Monday, which is today.

So, for now, just take this weekend in. I call myself love to just give myself so much grace. So, love, take this in this weekend. Sink into the trust. Trust yourself. Trust that the ideas will be there on Monday ready to go for your clients. Trust that the business is going to thrive without my constant attention.

I tend to hover. I'm kind of a helicopter mom when it comes to my business. So, I'm learning to trust that the business will be fine. The business is growing up. It's getting more mature. And it can live without my constant hand-holding and attention. The same is true for your school, by the way.

And I also wanted to trust that each and every one of you were going to get the message that you needed to hear and that it could wait until Monday and it would all be okay. And I want to share with you what happened over the weekend.

I sunk into that trust and I allowed myself to feel the urge and not get in my phone, not get on the computer, and just gaze out the window and just relish lying in bed in that early morning space, and just letting myself be with myself.

And here's what happened later on in the weekend. One of my clients actually texted me saying that she took a self-care trip to the beach for the day, and on her drive, she listened to episode 149 of the podcast, which is the self-concept evolution podcast.

And she said to me in the text, "This was exactly what I needed to hear. It really resonated with me. Thank you so much." And I just felt so in love with

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that moment. I just love it when our results, created by our thinking, has that turnaround that's so quick.

So, I made a conscious decision to be very present, love on my life just as it was, to trust that the business was fine, the clients were fine, everybody was fine and in good hands. And within 24 hours I receive a text from one of my clients saying how much she loves coaching and how much she loves the podcast and how much she's applying it to her life and just having this moment that I wanted her to have. It makes me so happy I could cry. It's so good.

I chose to trust my clients were in good hands this weekend and I heeded my own coaching advice, my own coaching tools. And I got to receive confirmation that, in fact, clients were in good hands. It's so good, right?

So, as a school leader, you too can start creating results like this for yourself. You can work really hard during the week and allow yourself to trust that you've done enough for your students and your staff, that you deserve time off from working, and that all of your students and your staff are in good hands over the weekend and that you can take a break and that what you want to provide for them, the work you want to do, the value and contribution that you want to provide, it can wait until Monday. It's all good.

So, here I am, recording this on Monday, feeling super-aligned and in integrity with my own teaching. It was an absolutely wonderful weekend. I drove home this morning, the most beautiful drive. And I'm so glad that I went to my friend's home and that I kept my promise to myself.

I honored my own word to me. And what happened as a result of honoring myself was that my friend got the very best version of me. And I had a

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better weekend experience because of it. The weekend wasn't just for my friend. It was for me.

It was about me connecting with me. Me allowing myself to love my life just as it is right now and tap into the simple things that I love to do; staying in my cozy comfy clothes all morning, sitting outdoors in that cool Tahoe air drinking really hot coffee and having conversations with someone I love, playing round after round of Baja Rummy. We watched the Masters golf tournament, which she loves golf. And I just enjoyed her enjoyment of the golf. It was so fun.

I don't even watch golf. My husband golfs. I do not golf. And I could take or leave watching golf on television. But watching it with her, it was so fun. We had such a good time. We watched football games yesterday on Sunday. We had a glass of wine by her big, beautiful fireplace. And I just cherish these moments so much and it allowed me to connect with her and with myself.

And that's what today's podcast is about. You as a school leader are not just a principal. You are so much more than your job title. And this is really easy to forget when you're consumed with site plans and schedule changes and observations for teachers and the curriculum and the technology and the meetings and the test scores and the learning gaps, on and on, right?

There are so many people to serve and so many problems to solve in education. And we as school leaders take our jobs very seriously. So seriously that we actually forget the part of us that wants to enjoy the work and enjoy our jobs and enjoy our lives and the people we're with, whether it's at home.



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In my case, when I was a new school leader, I literally – in retrospect I see this now – I literally was turning away from myself, who I was in my first years of school leadership. I tuned out the part of me that was lighthearted and fun and spontaneous. I was such a fun teacher. I was so connected with my kids and my parents and the staff and I spent time not just working, but just playing and having fun.

But when I stepped into this role, I got really consumed with filling the shoes of a school leader and I was consumed with trying to convince myself and others that I was capable of the role, that I was able to fulfil the role of school leader.

My self-concept gap between who I was and who I wanted to be as a leader was so wide that I really did believe I had to spend all of my time proving myself. I told myself that it was time to get serious and grow up. No more time for fun and games. This is serious business, right?

And I thought that leaders that were out there having fun were not taking their job seriously. I was judging them. They weren't doing the work. They weren't good enough. I was going to show everybody that I was serious and I was capable and that I was a leader who took this job with all seriousness and that I was never going to stop working until all the problems were solved in the educational world.

So, when the part of me, the personal side of me was waving her little white flag saying, "Help, help, I want just a day of rest, I want to be me," that essential part of me, whenever she wanted to show up, I stuffed her down. It was so mean.

I disconnected from that part of me. I no longer thought it was allowable to be serious and still have fun, to do the work and to not do the work. I didn't

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see it as a 50-50. I did see it as an all or none. I didn't see it as and you could have both, right?

So, the longer that I ignored myself and who I wanted to be, the more disconnected I became. And I got so lost in the work. And I completely lost sight of who I wanted to be. Not just as a leader, but as a human, as a person, as a friend.

It was definitely a time where I couldn't see the forest through the trees. I had lost sight of who I was as a person in the world, just as a human. And I don't want this to happen to you. And if it has happened to you, don't fear. We can get you back. I promise.

We miss so much of our lives when we don't know ourselves well. We live on autopilot. And I don't want you to look back in five or 10 or 20 years from now and realize that not only did you not accomplish everything you wanted to as a leader, but worse yet, you didn't enjoy the journey.

You can avoid regret in your future by doing this work now and looking at your current moment from your future. You can decide right now how you want your future self to feel about her past and her journey.

So, this moment right now as you're listening to this podcast, this is your current moment, which will become your past and you will have memories of this time of your life. I want you to fast-forward into your future and look back at this moment and ask yourself, am I having fun? Do I love this job? Do I love my life? Am I enjoying the journey?

How do you want to have experienced this life and this career? I want you to use this future thinking to fuel yourself into the practice of knowing yourself at a deeper level today right now.

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So, building a relationship with yourself. How do you build a relationship with yourself? The easiest simplest answer is that you do that the same way you do it with others. You ask yourself questions and you stop and listen for the answers. You spend time with yourself.

I want you to think of someone you absolutely love spending time with, or think about back in the day when you met your partner to be or your spouse to be, when you were first into them, like infatuated with them. How do you interact with them? How do you think about them? What do you do with them?

You talk with them often. You call them. You text them. You communicate however you communicate with them. But you're in contact with them on a regular basis. You're excited to talk with them, to spend time with them, to see them in person.

You're focused on them when you're together and you're asking lots of questions and you're soaking in all the answers. You just can't get enough of them, right? You lose track of time when you're with them. You feel so much love and excitement and interest in them and for them. You have a lot of positive energy when you think of this person and you think about them when you're with them and when you're not with them.

The same goes for getting to know you. You start with a genuine interest in yourself. You want to ask yourself questions and give yourself time to drop into the part of you that has the truest answers, and let those answers come to the surface.

It's just like when you're in a new relationship or a new friendship. You want to know all kind of things about them. And you don't rush them to answer you. You let the person think and you allow them to ponder and reflect and

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to come up with the truest answers. And you let them share what they want to share.

The same is true with you. You must give yourself think time and allow yourself to let those answers come to the surface. What I mean by this is that you don't let your brain stop at the first answer that comes up.

Oftentimes, our initial response is, "I don't know," when we ask ourselves a question. Or if you do have an answer, it tends to be the PC version of the real answer. It's what we think that we should say. It's what we think we should want.

Let yourself get past all of the I don't know and all of the PC answers. Wait for the true answer to come. And they will. They will come.

Now, sometimes, you will be surprised at some of the answers, and that's okay. Part of our resistance in this work is that you're afraid to know that deeper answer that comes to the surface. Because you might say to yourself, you know what? I'm totally unhappy. I totally don't like this job, or I don't like the district or I don't like being a principal, or I don't like being in this marriage or I don't want to spend my time in education anymore. You might have some answers that ring true for you that kind of scare you or that startle you and you think, "I can't think that. That can't be true."

So, just notice that you might be surprised at some of the answers. I find myself saying all the time, I can't believe this is coming up for me, or I didn't see this at all, I don't know where this is coming from. I have that reaction when the truer answers start coming to the surface.

So, what I want to say about this is as these answers do come up to the surface, just let them sit there. You don't have to do anything with them. You don't have to take any action. You don't have to change your job or

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quit your job or leave your marriage or do something radical. You just need to listen.

It's like when your friend is telling you something that's coming up that's very painful for her, you just listen. Or him. I have lots of men clients out there and men listeners. So, you just listen when somebody's speaking and they're sharing something that's painful or that feels kind of off for them. You just listen. You don't take any action. You don't have to do the things. You just have to notice and start with allowing the truth to even come to the surface.

So, I want you to explore this week, who are you when you're alone? What do you like? If nobody else's opinion was in the ring with you, if you were the only person living in your home, or you were on a deserted island, you're all by yourself, who are you when you're alone?

What do you like? What do you like to do? What do you like to think about? What do you do with your time when no one's looking? What is amazing and valuable about you? How are you 100% worthy right now? How are you enough. Do you accept you, all of you, good, bad, and ugly? If not, just notice. Answer the questions.

And what comes up – at least this is what came up for me, it was a lot of pain because I was so critical and so mean to myself. I was saying horrible things to myself, things I would never say to another human I was saying to myself.

So, I had to process that emotion. I had to allow myself to feel sad that I was so mean to myself and then I had to tell myself, no more of this, lovie. This isn't helping you. It isn't making you a better leader. It's not making you a better mom. It's not getting you into a relationship. It's not expanding

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your friendships and your networks. None of this is working so let's calm that down.

But continue to ask yourself questions. I want you to think about what your life represents so when you look at the materialness of your life, your home, your car, the things in your home, the clothes that you wear, your family structure, all of it, the activities that you do, how you spend your time, does your life represent the truest you? Do you love what you're surrounded by?

Do you love your car? I absolutely love my car. It's my favorite thing in the whole world. I love my bed. I'm so in love with our bed. I just love the things I've surrounded myself with. I love my clothing. I love the makeup that I choose to buy and my perfume and my shoes. I love my purses. I love my sweaters. I just love the things I've surrounded myself with.

I think I've been sharing with you, over the last few years, Mitch and I have gone through this extreme decluttering and cleansing process with our material things. Now that Alex has gone to college, he's almost graduated and on his own, we no longer need all the Boy Scout gear and the camping gear and the 25-year-old... all the things.

We got rid of so much stuff and I can't tell you how good that feels to have my new home be very clean and to be representative of who we are and how we live and that we love all of it.

Another question to ask yourself, people-pleasing tendencies. How do your people-pleasing tendencies impact your ability to be you? When do you lie to yourself? When do you lie to others to appease them or to not experience the discomfort of being honest?

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In what ways are you not being the authentic version of yourself in your life and as a leader? When do you say yes to things you don't really want to do? Or when do you say no to things you don't think you should do but you really want to say yes?

Your opinion of yourself, do you value your own thoughts and opinions more or less or equal to other people? What opinions of yours do you value and why do you value them? Fun things to think about. And finally, do you love yourself? Or do you talk down to yourself?

I spent decades self-deprecating. It never made me a better person. You wouldn't do it to your own children or your students or your staff. So please, do not do it to yourself. I want you to focus on what's right about you. Don't focus on what's wrong. Build yourself up instead of tearing yourself down.

There's nothing amazing about choosing to think how you're not good, how you're a hot mess, how you're a screw up, or whatever nasty things you've been telling yourself, or that other people have told you and you believe. It doesn't make you a better leader to think that you're not good enough right now. It doesn't serve you or your family or your friends or your colleagues or your students or your teachers or your own kids. It is a disservice.

We think that we're being modest when we focus on our imperfections. When we self-deprecate out of humor, we think that that's funny. And there's nothing wrong with laughing at ourselves and enjoying our mistakes and telling stories of past mistakes. We're human. Those stories are a part of who we are.

There's a difference between laughing at ourselves and not being so serious with ourselves all of the time versus being mean and self-deprecating and cruel in the way that we speak to ourselves.

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There's a difference between pretending we don't have imperfections and putting them in the spotlight all the time. So, you can pretend to be perfect and beat yourself up in the background. Or you can put them in the spotlight and tell everybody how wrong you are and how bad you are and how not enough you are and believe that you're not good enough.

This is all or none thinking. Remind yourself, there's a balance. You have to acknowledge the 50% of you – yes, 50% of the time we don't feel happy, we're not doing the right thing, we don't know. Half of the time, that is life. But you also need to focus on the other half, the other 50% of you that is amazing and smart and strong and committed and successful.

Knowing yourself personally impacts knowing yourself professionally. It is a window into how you view yourself. Your results are accomplished at the rate to which you build a relationship with yourself and how you talk to yourself matters.

It's very subtle. You say things like, "I'm trying to. I want to. I hope to. I need to get better at... I'm not good at... That's just not who I am. I need to get good at it. I need to try. I'm just not this..." All of those kinds of things we say, they sound very innocent. They're very subtle in the way that we speak.

But I want to offer you this. Instead of saying, "I'm trying to. I want to. I hope to. I just need to get better at this. I'm not really good at this. I'm just not that kind of person," I want to offer you this, "I am..." fill in the blank. I am an empowered leader. I am leading my school. I am creating change for the better. I'm in the process of learning technology. I'm in the process of creating the results I want. I'm capable of having work-life balance. I'm capable of getting more done in less time. I'm capable of delegating. I'm capable of not doing all the work and I'm capable of not working on the weekends and on my holiday break.



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One final thing I want to say before I go. If you're feeling any resistance to this, if it feels too touchy-feely or your brain is saying this is not a valuable use of your time, let me offer this. Building a relationship with yourself is a skillset that enhances your leadership skills.

Tell your brain that this is work. If you can't convince yourself that you should do this just for you, convince yourself that you should do it to become a better leader. Because in addition to living your full life with more intention, the more you know yourself and understand what beliefs and values drive you, the better you will understand the people you lead.

Education is the business of people. It's the business of learning about ourselves as humans and how to evolve our brains and ourselves as human beings. When you study yourself, you are also studying other people. And this is important because the better you understand you, and the better you understand others, that allows you to better serve and support them, which makes you a better leader.

This practice of knowing yourself and others creates more value and contribution as a school leader and to the field of education, which is what having influence and impact as a leader is all about.

So, this week, make a date with yourself. Be excited to spend time with you. And get to know you. Have fun with you. Give yourself some love. Alright, my friends, get out there and have an empowered week, and I'll talk to you next week. Take care. 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.

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