

## Ep #179: The Value of Alignment



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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## Ep #179: The Value of Alignment

Hello empowered principles. Welcome to episode 179.

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, but even more importantly happy June of 2021. You've done it. You've made it. Hopefully, you are on the last month of the school year of a pandemic for crying out loud. So I want to congratulate you. I know it felt like you weren't going to make it. You were exhausted. You were exasperated. You could not believe all that was going down over the last 12 to 18 months. I want to say you are so resilient. You are so capable.

You have learned skills beyond what you thought possible. Not just the hard skills of all you had to do to lead your school with all of the change throughout the pandemic, but you've learned that you are an empowered school leader. You are capable. You are confident. You get results. Your self-concept has grown 10x from last year. I want you to notice that and acknowledge yourself.

So happy June. Congratulations. Please take a moment over the summer, take lots of them, to celebrate yourself. Celebrate the wins. Focus on the successes. Focus on the accomplishment of getting through the year. It's absolutely incredible. I honor you. I respect you so much, and I want you to feel the accomplishment and the excitement and the success of this school year. Yes, you can look at all of what didn't work and what you're going to do differently next time. Right now, in June, this is the time to celebrate and focus.

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Let me tell you a few things that are going on over here in my world, in the Empowered Principal world. Number one, if you haven't signed up for the Empowered Principal Facebook group, please do so. You can go through all of the postings and see. I've posted 31 empowered principal thoughts in 31 days throughout the month of May.

Now, some of these thoughts seem very simple and easy. Other ones don't seem like they have anything to do with school leadership, but I promise you they do. There is a deeper meaning behind those thoughts because the way that you think directly impacts how you feel, how you show up at work, the decisions you make.

I want you to go through each of the thoughts and really try them on. It's like you're going to Nordstrom, and you're going to try on 31 different pairs of shoes. You're going to see which ones feel good. You're going to see which ones look good. You're going to see which ones up level your self-concept. Give them a try. So join us in the Empowered Principal Facebook group.

Another cool thing that's happening over here at the Empowered Principal Program group is that I am going to be offering four weeks of life coaching for school leaders. It's like an intro, a little taste, a little sampler platter of what it's like to experience life coaching as a school leader. So every Tuesday starting June 8<sup>th</sup> for the next four weeks throughout June. So the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 15<sup>th</sup>, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time I'm going to jump on the Zoom. If you guys have the registration and you're registered in the Zoom link, you're going to jump on with me.

I'm going to be offering four mini lessons, one per week. I'll teach for about 15 minutes, and then I'm going to open up the rest of the hour for you to ask questions and for you to get coached on anything you're struggling

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with, any questions you have, any concerns. I really want you to experience coaching.

So if you read my email about how you go to Costco and they have all the samples. You try them, and the ones you like, you just throw them in the cart. You don't even think about it. I feel like school leadership is really new to life coaching and what it looks like and what it feels like. What's the experience of it? How does it change? What's the value of it? Your brain has all of these questions about the experience of getting coached. So I thought why not give you free samples just like Costco does.

So I'm offering that. Be sure to get on my email list at [angelakellycoaching.com](http://angelakellycoaching.com). Sign up for The Empowered, which is my weekly newsletter. I send more than just weekly newsletters. I send you all kinds of amazing content. You guys get first access to all of my offerings. So be sure to get on the list. Throughout the month of June, show up for the month of coaching.

This is the perfect time to sign up for coaching because you actually have time. You're going to be rested physically, mentally, emotionally. You have some downtime. You can really experience the coaching and have fun with it. You guys, it's so much fun. We figure out what's going on. We create solutions, and we have fun doing it. We laugh at ourselves. It's just going to be fabulous. So I hope to see you there.

All right. So for the month of June. Speaking of having lots of time, I want you to spend your time in the summer not just relaxing and having a good time. Which you should be. Take the vacation. Sit by the pool. Play with the kids. Go to the zoo. Do the things. Especially now that we are free, and we can be out after the whole COVID thing, right.

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Also consider spending some time catching up on the podcast, listening to what I'm teaching, and really diving into it deeper while you have the focus and the energy and the time to do so. This month I'm going to talk about creating value as a school leader. This also, by the way, is the focus for the four coaching sessions that I'm offering throughout the month of June.

Today I'm going to talk about the value of alignment. So one of the first things I teach my clients when they sign up for the Empowered Principal Program is to align themselves to their leadership values. What do I mean by that? Alignment is deciding for yourself what you personally value as a leader. Professionally and personally.

Alignment's really about being honest with yourself and telling yourself the truth of what you value. What you want to experience in your life, what you want to live by, the values you want to live by, and the truth of what you really want for your life. What you want to experience professionally, what you want to experience personally. Putting those values down onto paper and then taking a look and noticing which of those values drives your leadership style.

Alignment's really about being truthful with yourself about what you believe. I want to highlight that when I say alignment, some people call it integrity. Some people call it their truth. Some people call it their values. I just call it when you feel aligned, you know it. You know what I'm talking about. That feeling of, "This feels true for me. This feels aligned. I feel an integrity. This feels right. It feels good. It feels connected to what I believe is true."

I want to point out that there is no defined set of leadership values that you should adopt or that somebody should write a book about and you follow all 12 values or whatever. That's not what this is about. This has to come from within. Every human on the planet has a set of values that leads their life.

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Your leadership values. What drives the way you show up in your life, how you show up at school, how you make decisions, how you decide what actions to take or what not to take, and why you do that.

There is something driving all of that, and those are the things that you believe should be influencing the way that you work and live. I want you to know though that a value is truly just an opinion, right. The truth of what you believe, and I want you to notice that truth is purely an opinion of what we think is true for us.

So for example, we believe that two plus two is four. We teach this to kids. We believe that that is true. We agree with others when you hear somebody else saying that, you agree with that. You agree with other people who also believe that two plus two is four. When you hear two plus two is four. When you hear two plus two is four, your brain feels like yes. That is the truth. It's absolute. It's certain. I don't question it. I don't judge it. I don't think negatively about it. It just is. That's what I'm talking about in terms of value. When you have a value that feels true to you, it feels like it makes sense. It's reasonable. It feels like alignment.

So in the case of two plus two is four, most people in the world. You could take a poll and ask them. Is two plus two is four? Do you believe two plus two is four? They would say yes. The majority of people believe that two plus two is four. So there's not a lot of argument out there. This is what I call one of those universal truths that the majority of people around you would agree with you.

There are other truths, most of them actually, might feel much less universal to you. So for example, as a leader, you might believe that data drives quality instruction. This might be a truth for you. You might believe it to your core. It feels true for you. You have evidence to prove that it's true

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to yourself and to other people. It feels very aligned for you to use data to make instructional decisions.

So if you are a data driven person and you value using data to make decisions about your leadership. If that feels true for you and it feels very aligned, notice how it impacts you as a leader. If this is your truth and you're honest with yourself and you are very decidedly so, that data is how we make decisions at this school, then you want to be honest with the people you work with. You want to let them know that your value is data driven instruction.

The reason you need to share this value, this truth of yours, with other people is because they need to understand that this is the value by which you are leading. They need to know, "I value data driven instruction. It feels very true for me. It feels very honest. It feels like I get results when I do this way, when I lead this way, when I teach this way. Therefore the way that I will lead this school is through data driven instruction." Okay?

The people who are following your lead need to know what your value is so that they can follow along. That they understand. They might not agree. They might not like it, but they know. They understand because you are very clear with your alignment to your value.

Furthermore, it's important for people who are following your lead to know because it impacts the way that you lead, the way you show up. It impacts who you hire, why you hire them, the professional development that you choose for your staff. How you plan your staff meetings, how you spend your time on campus during the week, how you measure your success, how you measure teacher improvement and growth, how you measure students, how you measure success as a school. All of your decisions and actions will go through the filter of that value of data driven instruction.

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Now, that could be your truth. If that resonates with you, I want you to own it and be truthful about it. Then share that value with the people you work with and that you lead. Other leaders, on the other hand. I'm not saying these are exclusive of one another. You could value both of these. I'm just using a couple of examples to help you see what I mean by understanding what your leadership values are, and then aligning yourself to them. Which means being truthful and honest to guide your leadership.

Other leaders might think that connection and relationships are the top priority. They believe that connection and relationships are what feels most true for them. That that's the top value that they believe in. They think that that is what creates quality instruction and success for students. That connection needs to come first in order to impact instructional data.

So if that's a leadership value for you, you also need to be true with yourself about who you are, what you believe in, what your value is. Then communicate that to those who are following your lead. They need to know this leader is a relationship-based person. She's going to spend time getting to know me, getting to know students. She's going to expect of me that I deeply know my kids. That I understand what's going on at home. That I'm connected with parents. That we're interconnected as a team.

So the teachers who are following your lead really need to understand what your values are, but they can't know if you don't know. So you need to take time to write down, "What do I value? Why do I value it? Do I love the reason why I value this? Does it feel aligned and true for me?"

Now that sounds very simple, and it is very simple. It doesn't take long for you to write down what you value, why, and then prioritize it. Then decide what filter you're going to use as a school leader. Which top priority of



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value you're going to lead through and lead by. But what happens as humans, all of us little humans running around on this planet.

The reasons that we're not always aligned are—There's a few reasons we're not always aligned. Number one, time. We think we don't have the time. So we don't slow down enough to ask ourselves, "What do we value? What feels true for us? What drives our decisions and actions? Why did we decide what we decided? What were we thinking at that time?" I don't mean that snarky. I mean truly, "What were we thinking at the moment we made this decision." What do we prioritize? What do we value?

How you spend your time, tells you what you value. How you spend your money, it tells you what you value. Time and money are an exchange of value. When you pay for something, that is an exchange of money for something you value. When you spend your time on something, that is an exchange of your time for something you value. Something you value doing, something you value spending time on solving a problem, spending time with people. Whatever it is.

Your time and your money are two very important assets along with your brain power. Those three assets, they get exchanged for what you value, what you believe in. So it's really important this first step of aligning to what you personally and professionally value. So take the time to do that. That's one of the reasons we don't stay aligned.

Another reason is that this one's kind of tricky because the truth behind understanding our values is that telling ourselves the truth and fully owning 100% of our truth doesn't always feel positive to us. It will resonate with you. So it doesn't always feel good, but it will resonate as truth.

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Have you ever had that happen? Where you made a mistake, or you said something? Maybe you said something to your partner that wasn't kind, and it was harsh. They say, "You really hurt my feelings. Or I didn't like the way you said that. Or I don't appreciate that." The truth of that situation is, "I said something unkind. I said words that I didn't mean to hurt, but I said them." You feel badly that that's the truth of what happened, but you also resonate with the truth.

When you say, "I hear you, and I appreciate you being honest with me. I want to say my truth is that I did do that and that I am sorry. I apologize." You feel badly, but it also feels true. So that's what I mean by sometimes telling ourselves the truth doesn't always feel good, but it will resonate as true.

So another example of this. I think about this with school leaders a lot. We like to believe that there are many, many things outside of our control as a school leader. Our time is out of our control. The things we have to spend our time on, the things we work on, the things we don't get. Having full control of our career and the results that we create for ourselves professionally and personally.

We don't want to tell ourselves the truth that we actually do have full control. Because what we make that mean—if we were to say like, "I have 100% full control over my life and my career and the results that I create, that truth doesn't feel good.

That's because when we do believe that we have full control and we don't yet have the results that we want, we tend to make that mean that something's gone wrong or that something's wrong with us. We are doing it wrong. We don't understand something. We haven't followed the process

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correctly. We're not smart enough. We're not good enough. We're not capable enough. All of that.

Which is why when we don't take full ownership over the control over our time, the control over our money, the control over our profession, the control over our relationships. When we don't own that, that's not true, but we resist the truth because it doesn't feel good to know that sometimes as humans we fail. Sometimes as humans we don't quite measure up to our own expectations, and that can feel disappointing and discouraging. Failure feels pretty yucky in the moment, right?

So the truth is we do have much more control than we think. We don't have control over external circumstances. But you do have control over how you think about them, how you choose to feel about them, and how you choose to act on them or approach them in a way that can serve you and your school or not. So we do need to tell ourselves the truth and just sit with it. We don't have to do anything about it.

So when you sit with it and say, "You know what? I don't know what I'm doing. I really need some help. I'm scared. I'm confused. I don't know how to do this technology thing, or I don't understand the school budget." Just the truth of acknowledging and admitting to ourselves we're not perfect. We don't know everything. We feel like a mess. We really would like some help, but we're afraid to ask because we don't want to look like we're stupid or we don't get it. All the mean things we say to ourselves inside of our minds.

I want you to know when you say those truths of who you are and what is true for you in the moment, that honesty feels like relief. It feels so much better just to say the truth than to pretend that the truth is something different than what it is.

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So when you say, “I don’t have control over my career.” A lot of people will reach out to me like they’ve just finished their first year, and they're like, “Oh this is not what I thought it was. I'm miserable, and now I'm stuck. I just got into school leadership. There's no way I can quit now. I just got started.” They're miserable.

But I want to offer you that you actually don’t have to stay in the job. You really can go back to teaching after a year and say this isn’t for me. You can go to another district. You could try for a different leadership position. You could try to move up to the district office. You could leave education entirely. You really do have control.

The reason we don’t like to take control of that ownership is because we don’t like the choices available. We want to be in the school leadership, and we want to like it. But when the truth is that we’re in it and we don’t like it, and that misalignment is happening. Like, “I want to be a school leader and I want to like it, but the truth is I just don’t like it. Or I'm unhappy right now. Or the struggle is real.”

We do have a decision. We can decide that we’re going to figure out how to like it. We’re going to give it another year or two or three to figure it out. Or we’re going to say, “Look. I'm going to give this two years, my full time and attention. If I grow to love it and I find a way to love it, I’ll stay. If not, I'm going to give myself the truth. I'm going to tell myself the truth, and I'm going to find a job that aligns to who I am and what I love and what my truth is.”

Because guys, life is too short to be in a job you're miserable in. There is nothing you have to prove to yourself or anybody else about sticking out a school leadership position that you do not feel aligned to. Okay. Enough on that. There's so much deeper that you can go into this truth, but I want you

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to lean into what feels true for you. So take the time and then tell yourself the truth even if it doesn't feel good in the moment.

Finally, the third reason that we don't stay in alignment or we don't get into alignment is the art of people pleasing, right? This is probably the top reason we don't stay in our leadership alignment. We live out of alignment most of the time. Or I should say we live out of alignment anytime that we do or say something because of what we think other people will think or how we believe it will make them feel.

So anytime we say yes to something when we mean no. Anytime we agree with somebody when we really internally don't agree. When we make decisions with doubt based on what we think other people are going to think or feel versus using our internal compass. Our internal compass knows exactly what it wants. So deciding from doubt versus deciding internally from certainty. Another time we people please is when we either take or don't take certain actions. Because we are spinning and thinking about what other people value versus using our own value as the filter.

So what is the value of alignment? Saying the word value a lot today, but the word of the month is creating value. The reason that this word so resonates with me this month is because value is what we do as humans. We offer our service of school leadership to provide value to students, to staff, to our district. We are contributing value to the world.

I want to teach you how to raise your ability to offer more value, to contribute more without doing more. Your value comes from your mindset, not through your actions. Your actions are a result of what you think about yourself, the world, other people, education.

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So when we can clean up and up level the way that you think about yourself as a leader, the way you think about your teachers and their capabilities. What you believe about students, what you think about parents, what you think about your district and your bosses, what you think about education as the institution. All of that is how you raise your value as a school leader, which then comes back to you in terms of financial growth and getting more done in less time. All of the results you want to create, you make them with your brain.

Okay. So the value of alignment. Number one, it provides a filter to run your decisions through. When you have a decision to make, if you have listed your values and you have prioritized them, you can use those leadership values to help you guide your decision-making process.

Most school leaders get into the position and feel overwhelmed by the number of decisions they have to make. They get into decision fatigue. They feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the decisions that they have to make because there are so many competing factors, competing ideas, competing results that you're trying to create. That can feel overwhelming and shut your brain down. But when you have a filter, like a criteria system through which you filter your decisions, decision making becomes very simple and clear when you use your lens of the value to run your decisions through.

This is how leaders who are very empowered and very in tune with who they are and who they lead and why they're doing what they're doing. That's how they're able to make decisions very swiftly, very confidently, and very certainly. They don't ask around. They don't use other people's value as a lens. They know what they personally want and why through that lens, and they make decisions that feel aligned and true for themselves.

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The only way school leadership will ever feel good to you is when you're making decisions based on your own set of values. Not your spouse's values. Not your boss's values. Not your teacher's values. Your values. It's really important to know what they are so that you can use them to ground you and tether you. So that's number two.

When you know your values, number one you have a decision. Two, that filter will tether you in conflict and disagreement. When you have made a decision that other people disagree with. When you have made that decision in alignment with yourself, you can allow space for other people to be upset or disagree or be angry or talk behind your back or throw a tantrum.

You can stay tethered through that storm. Because you feel like I understand. They have their opinion. They have a different set of values. They are not in agreement with that, and that's okay. Because I am. I have my own back. I trust myself. I'm aligned to this value. It feels very grounding for me, and it tethers you through that storm.

Finally, having a set of leadership values and aligning to them provides you such a clear focus and a priority system in your leadership for the short term and the long term. You really want to build your career from this place of alignment so that you can have a focus.

You're not going to be able to fix everything at school, but you can fix one thing. You can use one lens to make decisions to help your students, to help your staff members. You want you to know that, and you want them to know that so everybody's on the same page. Even when they don't agree, people will respect you when they know what that value is that's driving your leadership style, your leadership actions, your leadership decisions. Okay.

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So please be sure. Register for next week. We're starting next week. Register for the four weeks. You register one time, and you get in for all four weeks. There's no cost to you. I want you to experience and get a sample for what life coaching feels like for school leaders and feel the empowerment. Feel your energy up level. Feel your self-concept evolve so that you can be the best version of yourself in the coming year.

I love you guys so much. Have an amazing June week. First week of June. I will talk with you all next week. Take good care of yourselves. See you next week. Bye.

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](http://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.