

## Ep #186: Leading Breakthrough with a Half-Managed Mind



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With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 186.

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 everybody, and welcome to the podcast. Happy Tuesday. Happy July. How are you guys all doing? So I'm recording this on the last day of June, and I'm so excited because we have some very close friends coming to stay with us for the fourth. So my husband and I have been hustling. We've been working long hours in order to really be present and have so much fun with our friends. They're going to be here for a long weekend. We're going to do so many things. We're really looking forward to having them.

For those of you who don't know me or just have met me, welcome to the podcast first of all. I just want you to know that we bought a brand new townhome in downtown San Jose. We were so looking forward to hosting. We love to host people. We love to host dinner parties and gatherings. As you know, 12 days or whatever it was into the month of March we went into this lockdown pandemic. So we have not been able to host anything in our new home. Now it doesn't even feel new anymore, and we're so excited to have people come over. It feels like Christmas.

So I'm on a high. I'm recording podcasts like crazy because I am going to Cabo San Lucas for vacation in July. We are celebrating my son Alex's graduation from college. So we're going for the week to Cabo. Then in August, believe it or not, I'm going to Cabo again. So I'm in a business

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mastermind with my business coach, and we are going to have our live event for the mastermind. Of all the places in the world, she chose to host the live event in, guess where, Cabo.

So I'm going to Cabo San Lucas three weeks apart from one another. I've never been to Cabo, and it's been on my wish list, my dream list. I've always wanted to go. I made it happen for our family, and I think it's so fun that I get to go twice within a month. So that's going to be awesome. I'm really looking forward to it. That's happening in August.

Then in September I'm so happy because I get to go home to my family of origin. For those of you who don't know, my mom passed away at the end of November of 2019. So right before the pandemic hit. My mom had suffered a long illness. She suffered with COPD. She was diagnosed, gosh, 12 years ago and she was given one to two years to live. My mother lived almost 12 years. So I am so proud of her effort. I'm so proud of her will to live. She passed away on November 23, and I haven't been home since. So I'm going home in September to see my sister and my family and my dad, and to be home for the first time since my mom's passing.

So lots going on in my life. I love sharing it all with you. I hope you are connecting with friends and family and feeling like you're having so much fun and you are ready to roll.

So this podcast is especially for those of you who feel like you are interested in school leadership or you're in school leadership and looking to another career, like you're looking to up level, but you don't feel ready. So I work with a lot of clients who feel very compelled to know everything and read everything and go to all the workshops and be emotionally in control all the time and have the skill sets to be a leader. This is especially

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prevalent for any of you who are aspiring to become a school leader, you're thinking about it, or you just landed a job and now you're in it for the first time.

This podcast is called Leading Breakthrough with a Half-Managed Mind. I'm going to talk about what a half-managed mind looks like and how you can have skills to manage your mind, but your mind doesn't need to be perfect.

So for those of you who are holding back on up leveling your career until you're "ready", are you hanging on thinking, "I'm not ready to be a leader. I don't know enough. I'm too young. I don't have enough experience. I need to have more on my resume."

Whatever it is that you're thinking, whatever obstacle is in your way in terms of thinking about school leadership. I want you to understand that we've been trained to believe that we need to believe that we need to be fully prepared, fully organized, fully understand the position, fully professionally trained before we can accept greater levels of responsibility. Which then means greater levels of influence and impact, greater levels of leadership.

Of course, there is a need to expose yourself to different environments, different experiences, and different learning tools and strategies and concepts. Yes, you want to expose yourself and learn and grow and evolve. Nothing wrong with that. However, if you believe that you don't have the ability yet and your self-concept is, "I'm not certified or I'm not qualified or I'm not trained enough. I don't have a PhD. I don't have an EDD."

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If you're thinking a title or a status or a level of education is what makes you ready, then you're always going to feel that your ability is too low. That's going to make you feel incredibly overwhelmed, and you will fail. Because the thought driving your actions is that you don't have what it takes. That you're not good enough. You don't know enough. You don't have enough knowledge or experience or information.

So the concept of who you are right now and who you feel that you have to become as a leader can't stretch that far. You can't go from thinking "I don't have what it takes" to "I'm a confident, capable leader." The gap's too wide. You can't even imagine moving into a leadership position because you can't envision yourself in the position because you don't think you're qualified or good enough. Do you see that?

So when you are holding yourself back because you think you have to know and be fully prepared, you will never get there, and you'll always be chasing that. Then you'll think to yourself, "You'll hit a point where you just have to jump in, or you'll never do it. So the thought that you need to be a certain level, a certain title, a certain status, a certain educational level. Any of that kind of conversation in your head, I want to dispel that for you.

I want you to imagine moving into the leadership position even when you don't know all the things. Even when you haven't been trained properly or don't have the experience. What would it feel like to be a leader who's new and doesn't know? You're going to just feel new, and you won't know. That's the worst thing that can happen. Thousands of new principals get hired every year, and all of them don't know what they're doing. Yet they find a way to do it.

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So if you're a person who's sitting there feeling stuck thinking you're not ready, I want to encourage you that you are ready. The only way to be ready is to do it. So thinking that you need to know more is the death of your career dreams. I see this happen time and time again.

So many people call, and they get on a consult with me, and they have big dreams for themselves. They want to be an aspiring leader. They're a principal who wants more work/life balance. They're a principal who feels like they've lost themselves or they've gained 40 pounds. They're overworked to the point where they're not spending time with their family or their kids, and they feel like they're missing out on their kids. They have a dream of a lifestyle they want, of a career that they want, but they think that they need something more. They need more knowledge.

Let me tell you this. You can read all the books, attend all the workshops. But until you land that job, and you say yes, and you go in even when you're scared, even when you're new, even when you don't know anything and you feel like, "I have no idea what I'm doing." Until you're actually in it swimming in the pool of "I don't know and I'm new" that's the only way that you learn how. That you do know how to do it. You can't know until you do. You don't learn how to lead a school until you step up and lead.

Leading, by the way, it's not just referring to the moment you become an AP or a principal or a district administrator. Everyone is a leader. All of you. You are leading something in your life right now. You're either a mother or a father. If you're a parent, you are leading a household. You are leading your children.

If you're a teacher right now, you are leading children in your classroom. You are the leader of your classroom. Instructional coaches, you are the

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leader of these teachers and helping them. Principals. If you are a principal and you don't feel like you're qualified as a leader, guess what? You are a leader. You're in the position. You're doing the work. You are a leader.

Anyone and everyone is a leader and can be a leader. You are the leader of your own life. Even if you're alone and you're not doing anything and you're sitting at home, you are the leader of your life. I want you to step into the concept that you are a leader. You have the capacity to lead. How do we know? Because you're doing it. You're leading your life. You're leading your family. Maybe you have a group of friends that you're involved in. You can be a leader of that group.

There are so many ways to show your brain, to create evidence for your brain that you are a leader. You can lead a meeting. Leading is simply directing or guiding and being in charge of, being responsible for. So you can choose to lead your life or take a passive approach, sit in the passenger seat, and let life lead you. Make the decision to get in the driver seat and to take responsibility and ownership of the leader that you are.

Here's an easy way to think about leadership. Leading is simply teaching. When you were a teacher, you didn't have to be perfect. You didn't have to know it all. You wanted to know it all, and the reason you wanted to know everything ahead of time is because you wanted it to feel easy and fun and lighthearted and successful.

You wanted to be a good teacher. You wanted to have excellent classroom management because you didn't want kids to misbehave. You wanted to build student engagement because you wanted kids to be having fun and learning and progressing. You wanted to understand how to manage

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parents so that you didn't have the headache of dealing with parents and not know how.

The reason we want to know the things is because of the way we think we'll feel when we know how to handle them. You know how to handle them already because leading is simply teaching. When you think back to being a teacher, you didn't know what you were doing. You were new. You got in the classroom, and you were new. You didn't know. You messed up. You tried again. You figured it out day by day. It was simply trial and error. Wins and mistakes. I call it wins and learning. You either were winning or you were learning. There were good days and bad days, all of it.

You know how to do this. You just apply it to the new role that you are aiming to achieve. Or if you just landed a new role, you're in it right now. As you're going into the school year because it's July, and you're working your way up and your anxiety's starting to rise and you're feeling worried and nervous about being a new leader, just know that embracing being new, having fun, allowing yourself to be new.

Look, people know that you're new. Don't hide it. Don't mask it. Just go in and be new. You're just teaching. It's just now your campus is your classroom, and your teachers are your students. It's the same thing. So I want you to consider that you don't have to be stronger or better or more disciplined. Just strive to be the same. 50/50. Halfway managed.

When I was a teacher, I used to look at principals in my district who seemed to have it all figured out. I felt so isolated. I would go to the leadership meetings, and there were people, in my mind of course, that I felt they had it so pulled together. They knew what they were doing. They



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had incredible mindsets. Everything seemed to be glamorous at their school.

When I would talk with them, they would say like, “No, absolutely not. What are you talking about?” They would be honest with me, and they’d say, “I feel just as crazy. There are good days and bad days.” Their mind was just as messy as mine was. But I was comparing and despairing. I was thinking that they had it pulled together, and I didn’t.

When I realized that, and I think I've told this story before in the podcast, but I'll say it again. One of my colleagues was a 19 year principal veteran. She had been in the position for 19 years. I was like I'm guessing two or three years maybe at this point. I asked her, “Judy, when does this get easier?” She said, “Oh honey, this job never gets easier.” I wanted to cry. I thought oh my gosh. What have I gotten myself into? But here she was 19 years later going strong, doing the work.

I really admired and respect her, but when she said that I had a shift. I started thinking like, “Oh, I'm thinking that at some point in the future I'm going to feel better. At some point in the future, I'm going to know how to do this or I'm going to feel confident.”

I kept chasing the future thinking that in the future it would be better versus honoring where I was in the present moment, acknowledging the growth, acknowledging that I had gained resilience and the capacity for resilience. I was growing my ability to feel, my ability to process emotion, my ability to think differently, my ability to handle situations without overreacting or getting overly emotional or making it mean something horrible about me or wanting to quit.

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I stopped that, and I started looking at who I was becoming and building up my concept. Who am I as a school leader? Where was I then and where was I now? Look at the gap. Look at the growth. Focusing on that versus looking in the future and all that I haven't done and all that I don't know because it wasn't serving me. It didn't feel good to think that way.

So I decided I'm going to change the way I view myself. I started thinking about what I was doing well. Even when the days where my mind felt messy, I thought to myself, "I'm not the only one. Other leaders are going through the same thing I am. Their minds are just as messy as mine half of the time. If they can do it, I can do it. If they can be successful 50% of the time, so can I."

So I stopped trying to be successful 100% of the time, and I started focusing on the 50%. I stopped judging my moments when I did get off track, and I just gently guide myself back to more positive thoughts about myself and my goals.

Another sentence that works really well for me is that leading is coaching. Being a school leader means coaching those you lead and how to help them create the results they want to create, which in turn helps you as the leader create the result you want to create. So leading is coaching. Coaching is leading. It's all one in the same. Leading is teaching. Teaching is leading. All of that. Coaching your mind means to teach your mind how to think, how to feel, how to create the results you want, how to take different actions, how to make decisions differently.

We think that our job is to make reasonable, rational, sound decisions from a grounded place where we know all the information and we're making the right choice. I'm pushing that envelope. In order to transform your capacity

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to lead, in order to become a fully inspirational and influential and impactful leader, you need to make unreasonable decisions. You need to make decisions that don't always make sense to other people. You need to think outside the box and be willing to do something that doesn't feel reasonable. Right?

You want to coach your brain to think at higher levels. You won't be successful 100% of the time to do this, but if you can do it 50% of the time imagine the results you can achieve. We should want to coach ourselves. We should want to understand coaching. We should want to receive coaching. Coaching is just teaching. It's just understanding our mind and understanding how humans function. How the brain works, how the mind learns, how we grow ourselves, the obstacles that get in the way, the fears that we have, all the objections our minds come up with.

The better that you understand yourself and why you think the way you do, and why you feel the way you do, and how those two things impact how you show up, and the decisions that you make, and why you hold back from going for the goals and dreams that you want for yourself. The fears that hold you back like, "Oh, I don't have the time. Or I don't have the money. Or I don't have the resources. That couldn't possibly be me." Maybe you don't have the belief in yourself that you can be a school leader. You're poo-pooing your ability to stand in a role and lead.

The only reason you don't feel you can lead is because you're afraid of feeling negative emotions. You worry that it's going to be hard. You think that people won't like you. They're going to judge you and criticize you or yell at you or hate on you or say things on social media. Yeah, they are. They're going to say all of that. They will. That isn't the problem. The

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problem is that you make that mean about yourself. The problem is whether you buy into that or not.

As leaders, it's our job to evolve our ability to think and feel emotion. This is how we process how to evolve. This is how we become a leader. The more you're willing to be coached and to learn and to be in the job even when you don't know, it will increase your capacity to coach your teachers to do the same.

You will be a better onboarder of brand new teachers because you'll understand what it feels like to be new and be in it and not know what you're doing. You'll know how to coach your teachers when they're saying, "I don't know what to do. I don't know how to differentiate. I don't understand classroom management. I don't know how to handle this angry parent." You'll be able to help them because you'll have studied yourself being new and not knowing and how to manage the feelings that come when you feel insufficient and insecure.

Study yourself in order to help your teachers. Invest in yourself and in your brain and in your process of who you're becoming as a school leader so that you can better serve your entire community. Because education is the business of human evolvment, and we have to be willing to play the game of human evolvment. We have to be in it in order to help other people do it. We are teaching students how to think and process and handle life situations. As leaders, you're doing the very same thing. You're just doing it with adults who are big kids, right?

You want to know how to manage your mind so that you can teach students and teachers to do the same. Learning how to manage your mind doesn't mean you become the perfect leader or that you have the perfect

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thoughts or that you feel good all the time or that things feel easy. What it does mean is that you understand how your brain works and why you think, feel, and act the way that you do. It's a matter of building up your mental and emotional resilience and having the tools to coach yourself when things go off the rails and you feel overwhelmed. Because it's going to be 50/50.

All you need to know, the comfort you need to have is that you can do all of this with a half-managed mind. You only have to be on track 50% to hit the goal. How amazing is that? You don't have to be perfect. You don't even have to be 80%. If you do this 50% of the time and you go all in on yourself and you study yourself and you learn, you will grow. When you grow, you can coach. When you coach, you're a leader. When you lead, you're inspiring people into new action. Have an amazing week. I will talk to you next week. Take care. Bye, bye.

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learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.