

Ep #196: Professional Development: Real Talk with Daniel Bauer



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello, empowered principals. Welcome to episode 196.

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.

Angela: Well, hello, my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday and welcome to the end of September. Welcome to the podcast and for those of you who are new, we're so happy that you are here. With me today, I have a very special guest, somebody who's actually really close to my heart, because he is a fellow coach, a fellow podcaster, a fellow master minder, he also helps school leaders in a mastermind capacity. He's been on my podcast before, he's coming back because he has a fabulous new book that is launching this week and he is here to tell you all about that.

We are here to dive into professional development. We're going to have some real talk about professional development today and define what it is, the value of professional development, why people resist it and really what makes it effective. Daniel's book is going to share all of those juicy insights with you.

So today we have Daniel Bauer. Daniel, he is the founder of Better Leaders Better Schools, has a podcast The Mastermind and I'm just so happy that he's here today. So thank you, Daniel.

Daniel: Yeah, thank you so much Angela for having me. Like you mentioned, I think I might have. Been on episode 100. Woah!

Angela: I know!

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Daniel: You know, what a milestone.

Angela: I know, we were just talking offline about how we almost made it to 200. So I said he might have to come back, we might have to have a little party.

Daniel: I might have to come down. It's just, you know, kudos to you. I admire your work and a lot of people, they leave, right? I think there's a leadership tip here, where sometimes it's actually just a test of resilience and continuing to show up. You know, a lot of people just leave, they give up or whatever and you've been out there consistently creating value for leaders. It's a testament to your work and you're still around, helping out. So thank you for everything you do.

Angela: Thank you so much. I think back to that episode 100. Where I was sitting in my little condo at the beach, in my closet, just getting this podcast off the ground. To think that it has doubled in its size in terms of number of episodes and the value that you and I have created in the world over the last couple of years, since then, it really blows my mind. I mean, I know we follow one another, and I love having a compadre out there in the world that when I read your work, it resonates with me and I cheerlead for you and support you.

It just feels like there are teammates out there in the world who are really helping school leaders. Because, as you and I both know, our ultimate passion and mission is to expand what's possible for school leaders, not just in their professional world, but in the way they experience that professional world in their professional lives and how it relates and impacts their personal life, of course. But anyway, it's just such a pleasure to know you and I'm glad you're back on the podcast.

I can't wait to talk about this. This is a topic I think that a lot of school leaders struggle with and they feel like they have to develop the

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professional planning on their own. This is something I've noticed with my school leaders, especially the new ones where they're thinking I don't know where to start or what to do or how to develop my teachers, and they're not really thinking about, "Well, what about my own development and how can I expand my development in order to expand my teachers?"

So, I want to start with the definition of professional development. I think people use it in a lot of different ways and I'm curious to know, Daniel, what you think about professional development, what it means to you and how you define it.

Daniel: You know, I think the story I like to tell, is that I'm a learner, right? When I was in school, I loved to learn there. Obviously, that translated when I was a classroom teacher, school leader and also you know not a lot of not many people know this, but I wanted to be a professor right I wanted to pursue a PhD. I don't necessarily know the topic, but I wanted the tweed jacket, right? Now I got the beard and I got the glasses.

What really attracted me to the position, was I wanted autonomy, you know, and the schedule. I love to read, I love to write, I love to help and to teach people to see, you know, things that they don't see already. So, I think that professional development is just the lifelong pursuit of getting better. You know, there's a great quote, I think it's in *The Infinite Game*. I'm pretty sure it's from Simon Sinek and I could be wrong on both accounts and totally misattributing this.

The idea is not to try to strive to be the best, but to be better. I think that's a good definition of professional development too, that it's the continuous improvement over time, right? And that's a core value, something that resonates with me in my soul and just my DNA, how I'm made, and that's what I'm all about. So I hope others experience that as well.

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Angela: Exactly. I agree with that so much and I do think it's Simon Sinek. I think you actually were the one who told me to read that book, and I ended up listening to it on an audio version and I remember where I was driving when I heard that part of the book. So I think we're on track.

Daniel: Where were you driving?

Angela: I was coming home from Tahoe. I was driving through Carson Valley in Nevada. I had just gone up there to get away, get out. It was during COVID. I went to get outside and get fresh air in nature. I was driving home and this book was just resonating with me, so deeply and I was taking in the view of the mountains and I heard - this was the theme of the chapter I was listening to and I just felt this relief of pressure, of I don't have to be perfect at what I'm doing, even in this new field of ours that we're kind of creating as we go.

It doesn't have to be perfect, we just have to be showing up, like you said, consistently, and just by showing up, we're doing it right. Right is good enough and it doesn't have to be the best. That idea of that competitive edge of, I think they were talking about large companies who are trying to be the best, versus being the best versions of themselves. It was something around Microsoft or Apple, I think. I really just felt the sense of relief that we're doing OK here, right? We are developing and growing without having to rank ourselves in some way that the brain wants to do.

Daniel: It was a personal computer story with Apple and Microsoft. Apple took out a full page ad in the New York Times, which you can imagine is quite expensive and just said welcome, we're glad you're here. That was the gist of it. But the point of The Infinite Game and to connect the dots for the listener, you mentioned how you're a cheerleader, right? And I promote your stuff as well, that's because we're playing the infinite game. You don't

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have to lose, Angela, for me to win. There's 91,000 principals in the US alone, let alone the world, right?

Angela: Right.

Daniel: There's more than both of us can serve, so if we're both serving our target people, the folks that resonate with us and creating value for them, everybody's winning, you know, that's my motto. Everybody wins when the leader gets better. So it's all good, yeah.

Angela: Right. What I love even more than that is you could look at us and say we're offering the same thing, but I just believe that we're offering in tandem. My work complements yours as your work complements mine. People could actually experience both of them and double down on their growth. What I offer is a little more individualized, customized coaching, and you have The Mastermind Program.

Even if we were both offering Masterminds, I still think there's benefit, at least in my mind, like that expansive growth. It's a complement, and The Infinite Game really is about seeing your professional growth and this is how I define it. Your personal growth and the capacity to which you're willing to grow personally is the capacity to which you grow professionally and those really go hand in hand.

So, I see our work actually complementing one another and not in competition, at all, in any way. Because there isn't any benefit to thinking that way, I think, for our audiences. There's only more support. Actually, I just had a client say, "Do you know this podcast: Better Leaders Better Schools?" I said yes, I do know. He goes, "I love listening to you both, because you bring such different perspectives," and it all works right?

Daniel: Yeah, that's super neat. Well, you know, think of it in fitness, you might hire a trainer, but you're also going to potentially hire a dietician too,

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right? Because there's many aspects to it. Or I'll start working with the business coach and something that he brought to the table, that's really interesting, is that there's a mindset specialist as well, right?

So I'm thinking about scaling and growing the business, from an organizational point of view. But then there's somebody who's like drilling down just getting into my head and the stories I tell myself, right? The scripts, all that kind of stuff and then it gets really interesting as well, but I really enjoyed the process.

Angela: Yeah, it's fun. That's kind of what I start with our leaders, is that mindset piece and kind of expanding that. I think of it as a rubber band. We kind of got to stretch those thoughts and belief systems and see if we can expand our what I call "portal possibility" into what do you actually believe is possible. Where's that glass ceiling where you're like, I don't know if education could really be this or I don't know if I could become this, and we kind of push that limit, right?

So let's shift gears a little bit and talk about the value of PD. I've spent a lot of time this year discussing the value of our work as school leaders, the value of having fun with that, the value of constraining our focus, the value of connection. I've really tried to dig in deep. Like, why do we do the things that we do as leaders and what is the return on investment? Whether it's our time, our money, or our energy and attention, what is the value of this time and energy we're spending?

I think that this is a fun conversation to have with you about the value of professional development, in terms of its worth. Why would we spend our time and money and then that ripple effect on that long lasting impact that PD has for people. What are your thoughts?

Daniel: Yeah, there's a couple ways to think about it, like for me, the more I invest in myself, the more that comes back to me, right? It could feel scary,

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because like you said, who do I have to become and do I have it in me? You know, I think those are some questions that are going through every leader's mind. Whether they're running a school or a business or whatever, so there's like those mindset upper limits to get through. But what I've realized is, the more I invest in my own leveling up, so to speak, it just has had tremendous return on investment, right? It's been expensive.

Here's the thing, even if I got just one insight, because we're talking about podcasting, and one of your listeners enjoys your show and my show. I went to a webinar today, that's really actually for novice podcasters. I've been doing it for six years and I've got a lot of downloads, I don't even need to talk about that. I went to listen for one idea and I got probably three that I had never thought of. So going to that and investing, you know, an hour of my time, there was no cost to this one. Sometimes, PD is free, and sometimes there's a price involved. Actually the people putting it on, I can break it down, that webinar was free, but I've also invested \$1,500 on an online program that they have, which was a game changer. I just joined a program that's a year long that was \$3,000.

Money is actually relative too, right? Because I used to buy used cars in cash, and then this year, I bought a new car. I had to take out a loan, but that was something important to my partner as well. Out of the gate, that it's not going to break down and all that kind of stuff. The point is, money is relative. Then there are people who could have bought my car without a loan and bought it in cash, right? Then there's Alpha Romeos and some people buy those in cash and I could never even qualify for that, so whatever. So that's my story in some of the ways that I've grown.

But you know, I could think of Scott, who is a client and a friend. When we met at a conference, he was an assistant principal and as we've worked together, he became a principal. We've worked together now for nearly six years and now he's in central office with an assistant Superintendent

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position. So that's just that's a very tangible like, what's the benefits for him?

He moved into these new roles with more and more impact and influence, and he'll tell you, and it's super humbling. He's like Daniel, "You know what you've taught me and in the space that you've created and the people you've connected me to, that was everything. It was a game changing moment for me," and now we're talking about what does it look like to support him in the central office. Because Masterminds is really for principals and AP's. Anyways, you know, those are just case studies, I guess.

But the other thing, let me say this, what's the cost of not investing in yourself? When it comes to like culture and when it comes to your staff, you know and you're thinking about programs to put him in and sometimes people say, "Oh that's too expensive." Or people might say, "Well, what if I train them up and they become these rockstar teachers or rockstar principals and then they leave?"

Well, what if you don't invest in them and they stay? You know what I'm saying? So that's from an organizational high level, invest in your people and if they go, that's great, they're going to tell an awesome story about how much you supported their growth and that will attract the right people to that organization. But if you don't invest in them, and they stick around, that's a real cost.

You know, there's the science of relativity. Galileo was doing a thought experiment where you have this boat, and underneath the boat, there's a person and they have a ball in their hand. The boat is moving horizontally through the water, but underneath the boat they can't see the water, they can't see any of that, perspective is everything. They drop the ball from the

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hip and all the motion they see is the vertical ball, dropping from the hip down to the ground, because of gravity.

But if you and I were observing the boat and we were superheroes and we had X-ray vision, we could see that not only is that person dropping the ball and that's moving vertically, but we'd see the person, the ball and the boat moving horizontally, as well, right? It's really all about perspective and if you think that you're crushing it, that you're doing great, even if your school is achieving at a high level, that might be true, but if you're not growing, you're actually standing. Then you're just like the person in the boat who thinks that there's only this vertical movement, when all your peers that are investing in themselves, are lapping you and they're moving forward, as you're just standing still.

Angela: Right. That I mean, I think that's a mic drop, because we think that we don't have the time or we don't have the money. Because we're so busy as a school leader, we look at it two ways like we don't want to take the time out of our day or take the expense out of our budgets to pay for personal and professional growth. Or, we think that those resources belong to somebody else.

Daniel: Good point.

Angela: Yeah, like, I'll give that to my teachers versus myself. But as you've said, and what I love about your message is that the school's capacity to grow, depends on the capacity of the leader's growth, right? Better leader, better school.

Daniel: Yeah, you're the leverage-able part. You're the lead domino and everything comes from you as the leader. So yeah, I mean you should look for ways to support and develop your staff. We're not saying don't, but stop having such a scarcity mindset around yourself. It's the classic airplane,

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putting an oxygen mask on yourself before others, and either people get that or they don't.

There's just so much influence. You are the lead domino as the school leader and you know where you go, the school goes. There's research around that too, so that's my thing when I say everybody wins when the leader gets better. You know, JFK with your rising tide, lifts all boats, do you want to do that or not? So if you pour into yourself, everybody else is going to grow.

I wrote a post actually recently about one of the reasons that I've been a success is because the framework is ILT (Invest, Learn, Teach). Invest in myself, learn a bunch of stuff, and then teach it to others. You teach it. So if you go out and get that PD experience, whether it's with me or you or somewhere else, because you just find the right fit for you. But you invest, you learn a bunch of stuff, then go teach it to your staff. Teach it to your leadership team, teach it to your peers in the district, right? That's so leverage-able and one of my core values is the ripple effect, that's what it's all about, right? A small spark that leads to dramatic change.

Angela: Exactly. I just wanted to take a step back and you mentioned something about if you're not choosing to grow, other leaders are lapping you. I want listeners to hear this from the perspective, not as we were talking about competition, but really from the perspective of when you are committed to your learning, you are the example of what is possible. You cannot create solutions that are outside the box or be willing to challenge some of the status quo things in education, that you know aren't working, either for teachers, students or families, or even for yourself, but you're afraid to. There's a lot of fear factor going on.

Like you just said, ILT (Invest, Learn, Teach). So you invest in yourself and you learn. I think people are kind of afraid of that actual teaching piece,

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because they're afraid of what people will think or this is a new idea or this is going against other things we've been taught. That can feel kind of scary, which is why we have The Mastermind and which is why we have coaching, right? It helps you process through the thoughts that are creating that resistance to going out there and investing, teaching and learning for yourself. It's really thinking about the value of personal and professional development, as a school leader, the value for yourself, but really, the value for your people's professional development is not just for you, it's for your people. You become a bigger leader. You become a better leader. For your staff. What I love about your story about your client, what was his name again?

Daniel: Scott.

Angela: You expanded what he believed was possible in terms of his leadership legacy, right? He was in it as a principal and couldn't really see past that, because you're in the struggle of it. You helped him see that he had the capacity to become an assistant Superintendent and now he has so much more influence. Then from there, he can now see himself as a Superintendent one day, and not just that, maybe he writes a book or maybe he presents at a conference or maybe he is a keynote speaker at an association event. We just want to expand all of your thinking, about what is possible for you, so that you can expand it for others.

Daniel: Yeah, that's so good. There's a number of people that have written books, with their staff. I'm not gonna list all the names, but it's just pretty cool. You know, it's just like what is possible. We dream big, that's what it's all about.

Angela: I love it. So much fun.

Daniel: And the other part of our worrying, you know, it does take courage to put yourself out there and to teach and to challenge. Where you

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experience true freedom, is not caring what people think. I mean that in the nicest way possible, like you need to be sensitive, you need to listen and you need to understand where folks are coming from. But until you can get to the point where I'm strong, I'm resilient and I'm actually not doing it for recognition. I'm doing it because of this purpose, for me or the cause.

Listen to this, because this is an infinite game too. I learned just cause and I wrote mine for BLBS, and that's to connect, grow and mentor every school leader who wants to level up. Again, too big, this is never going to be accomplished by just me, I can't do it all by myself, which is why we partner together and promote each other, and that kind of thing too. Definitely dream big and don't worry about what other people think. If that's pulling you through it, you have true, true freedom for sure.

Angela: When you get into this space of spinning out about what other people think, that is when you want to shift over to, “How can I help those people?” I think about it when I'm in my head about what they're thinking about me, I try to shift it to the opposite, “What am I thinking about them and how can I help them?”

Because when you're up in your head and you're thinking about what other people think that's being self-reflective and worrying about how you're going to feel with that. But if you shift it, just that little bit, it really becomes so much more inviting to want to share what you have to grow. Because it isn't about what you think people will think, but how you can help them grow. It opens up your willingness to share what you have.

To all of you leaders out there listening, you have so much to offer, but you have to believe that you have a lot to offer and that it is of high value and that the right person will hear what they need to hear and it will be because of you.

Daniel: Yeah, so good.

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Angela: So I feel like this was kind of leading into this, but there is some resistance in education around professional development. Would you say?

Daniel: Yeah, sometimes you know there's some research around that too. There was a 2020 study that was done by NAESP and the Learning Policy Institute and they identified what the resistance is. According to the 407 principals surveyed, so that's a decent group that you could generalize across the nation or the world. They said, lack of time, that was 67%, 43% insufficient building coverage, and then 42% not enough money. Those were the top three reasons for why people didn't want to participate in PD.

Angela: Wow. Okay, so I believe that your top assets are: Number one, your brain. Number two, your time. Number three, your money and people. You mentioned those three things in terms of they don't feel like they have the time, the money and the energy to invest. I'm always wondering, like why we're choosing to believe those thoughts, like why we're choosing to spend our time elsewhere, instead of growing. While we're spending our money elsewhere, instead of in ourselves and in learning when we're in the field of education.

I'm always curious as to why we're kind of hesitant to push our brain to think bigger. I'm guessing, just based on my clients and my experience with coaching, it's uncomfortable to grow and learn. Learning isn't always easy, it's not always comfortable and it makes us challenge things that we've believed for a long time and we have to sit in that discomfort.

Sometimes, and I've seen this with teachers when I was a principal and we would be in PD's, there was kind of this like, "This too shall pass or I don't really like this, I'm not going to tune in, I'm going to play like I'm learning, but not really learning."

When you think about that Daniel, one thing you're so good at is connecting with people, engaging people and really getting them involved

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in the process. So tell me what your thoughts are and kind of leading into your book that I'm super excited to talk about. What do you believe makes professional development, one attractive, two engaging in the moment and then three that after-piece where it's actually effective and transformative?

Daniel: Yeah, well, you know, when I was working on the book *Mastermind: Unlocking Talent Within Every School Leader*, the first draft had a bunch of great ideas, but it was really poorly organized and that was the feedback I received from my senior editor and a funny story, when I released my first book, which was self-published, I paid an editor and basically dumped all these really cool ideas on her and she put it together in the book, she organized it.

That's not how Ariel played at Corwin, and she's like "You need to organize this." I'm like, "I don't know how." So I got super scared and so, just like leaders run up against, am I good enough? Can I do it? I'm like, "Whoa, what am I going to do?" and this connects to resistance with PD, because I don't blame school leaders, I think actually the system promotes a lack of professional development. Because a system is designed to get the results that it gets and it's perfectly designed for that. If we really, from a high level organizationally, wanted school leaders to be consistently growing, then we'd see that. Then you and I wouldn't have businesses, you know, so the system is set up that way. You gotta get out of your own head, get out your own way.

This is connecting the dot that this system has principals running from task to task, turning in stupid forms that nobody looks at, and they're in the weeds. They're equating low level things that do need to get done. They're important for the operations of a building and conflating that with the high level leverage-able thing that creates impact within our organization that deserves carving out a good amount of time.

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Your brain, like you said, is your number one gift and vision, right? Like crafting a meaningful vision that guides the work. Where, Scott, he did this thing with sticky core values with me and that has completely transformed the culture, right? They can praise people, they can have hard conversations with people, based on violations of core values or living them out, they give out awards. I mean, it's like it influences everything, right? But if you're in the weeds and doing just the low level stuff and in the rat race, you just don't know any other way and that's how the system is designed.

There's a motivational speaker who is actually in the Hall of Fame, Joel Weldon. He says you can't read the label when you're inside the jar, right? So it's all about running from fire to fire and just doing all this stuff. To me, I'm almost out of breath, just trying to describe that. So not only do you lack time to do the meaningful work like crafting a compelling vision, you're also running up against, do I have time for developing myself and that kind of stuff. That is a huge, huge challenge to get around.

Angela: Yeah, it is, and it's possible. I think that is what I want to offer is that you will have obstacles, you will have mental obstacles, like thoughts that you have. You will have actual time obstacles, you are going to have priority obstacles. When you are willing to look at what are the obstacles coming my way and what might be the solutions around those, so that I can access the professional development that I need so that I can create the culture I want and support my teachers in the way that I want to.

To be honest with ourselves about the obstacles that are just tried and true. They're out there, kind of outside of us. Then we have to look at the internal obstacles that we're creating in our mind, and I think that's what you probably work on with your clients in The Mastermind.

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Like those common themed constraints that we find ourselves running up against, which lack of time, lack of resources and money. You know, maybe that just feeling maxed out emotionally, mentally, psychologically, that your brain is just too full to take on one more new learning and working with ourselves to see, “ Oh, of course, I have that obstacle. Let me now start to look at ways to move around it, so that we can continue to grow.”

Daniel: Yeah, so I didn't build the bridge. What I was living out was I had the choice, do I keep plugging away at the book, in trying to figure out how to organize it and do something I'm not so sure that I'm capable of doing. That's the principal or the assistant principal who keeps doing the same thing, expecting a different result.

They put in more hours, they work harder, take fewer breaks and all this kind of stuff. I know that I wasn't going to create a book that was tightly organized, and so the way I created a better book is I stopped writing and I started taking walks in nature. I have a puppy, she's eight months old now and so we're going out for walks and I was just thinking about, “ Why does The Mastermind work into your question? What makes PD effective?” and that kind of thing.

I just really had to think deeply about it and this was for days, it didn't come right away. But, I invested in the process and I realized - I started playing and I thought it would be fun since we serve educators, “ Can I build a framework around the ABC's?” So, I came up with this thing called The ABC's as a powerful professional development, and I'm like “That's it!” If you experience authenticity, you have belonging, and you have challenge, in my lived experience, that leads to life and leadership transformation. It just unlocks potential and what you're capable of and so that then became the outline of the book: What's the problem?

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What's the challenge? The introduction, the problem, the challenge, the ABC's and then the conclusion. And that totally works, and you know that you've created something that works when you start explaining it to people, or at this point we're recording the books, not out yet, but the advanced copies are getting super good feedback.

Angela: Yes.

Daniel: People are like, "This makes sense, I love it and can't wait to promote it," so I have some big expectations for the book and how I'm going to continue to serve school leaders in the future. But the way I could create a better book was actually to stop writing and to start thinking.

Angela: This is the gold mine of the podcast interview, because it's so counterintuitive to what we've been trained to think. What we've been trained to believe, we actually do this in schools, like more standards, more instructional minutes and more hours.

Daniel: It's so silly.

Angela: I know, it's crazy, right? But the stopping and giving the brain space to come up with that creative solution and I love that you actually said you didn't just sit at your desk and say, "How do I organize this?" You left that space and took the dog for a walk. The dog is so cute by the way, guys, we're going to have to post a picture of the puppy in the show notes, I love the dog.

Truly, you got out of this kind of energy space and out into nature and when you do that, that's when the magic happens and when the ideas come to you. That's exactly how I got the idea for the Empowered Principal Playbook, that's evolving as we speak. That book is going to be coming out in the future, but it dawned on me like there is a rhythm to the school year and this playbook that I'm envisioning in my mind is going to be the

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organization piece, is that rhythm of the school year like there is a beginning, a middle, an end, and a summer. Trying to organize it through the seasons that we go through as school leaders, it just makes it so much easier to write, so I love that you said, “I stopped doing the work and the solution came.”

Daniel: Yeah, that might not be that you're asking for my opinion, but that might be a fun way to potentially organize it, like fall, winter, spring, summer. You could play around with that sort of image and motif a lot and have a lot of fun.

Angela: Yeah, I think so. Here we are, brainstorming together. I love this. Let me ask you this about your book writing process. So for those of you principals who never think that you're going to write a book, I want to first, plant the seed. You might be writing a book someday, right Daniel?

Daniel: Yeah, for sure.

Angela: I want us to talk about this because I want to expand your portal of possibility and what's possible for your knowledge as you're expanding as a school leader. But let me ask you this: the book writing process, can you just describe that a little bit for the listeners, because it's not like you sat down, wrote a book, and then went off to The Mastermind. Tell the listeners about the process, for you.

Daniel: For me, the first book and the second book. So, Better Leaders Better Schools, Road Map and now Mastermind: Unlocking Talent Within Every School Leader, I followed the same process. I basically was taught this in high school, I mean, it's just an outline.

Actually, the way I think about it now too, is since I blog and write a lot of articles, essentially, I try to create like 100 really cool micro articles and put that all down on paper. So this is the outline portion, but actually, what I'm

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doing, is thinking of really interesting titles that would grab people's attention. So topically, I'm like, oh I want to talk about this, this, this and this, and those could all be blog posts.

Actually, there's many very successful authors that if you really follow their work, they're either just expanding or repurposing articles that they tested, so there was a data piece to see how folks responded to what they put out into the world. That's me. So I do a bunch of topics, and I write these subject lines, or the titles that I think would be captivating.

Then what happens is I do the Jim Collins 20 mile March, where every day I write for an hour and I write on as many topics as I can and I don't have to write in any sort of order. I just write what I'm inspired to write about that day and I force myself to write whether I want to or not and some days I write like thousands of words.

While I was in the process, if you follow me on Instagram, that was in my story, I would just take a screenshot of 3000 words, some days, 200 words. It was the same amount of time, an hour each day, and then basically, after three months or so, you definitely have a 45,000 to 55,000 word manuscript. Then you give it to your editor and they go, "Oh, this is poorly organized." So that's how I approached it. That kind of thing. I mean that's how it happened.

Angela: You can approach school leadership the same, but it doesn't have to be for ten straight hours with your buns in your seat, right? It can be short stints, but the consistency is what matters and what I love about what you said is, some days you were super productive and knocked it out of the park and it just flowed with ease, other days you sat there and probably struggled through that hour of getting the 200 words onto paper, and that is school leadership.

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There are days where they flow and days where they don't and it doesn't have to mean anything personal. It doesn't mean you're a good writer one day and a terrible writer the next day, or a good leader and a not good leader. There's so much all or none thinking around this, it just can be like, this is the process.

Daniel: Yeah, that is the process, that's exactly right.

Angela: So tell us what else you want to share with us about the book? Tell us everything.

Daniel: I gave the framework and the neat thing is that you can use the ideas and there's plenty of practical examples. So when you get into the ABC's and we're talking authenticity, belonging and challenge, each of those has like three more layers to it. So authenticity is about psychological safety, self-awareness and being values driven. Belonging is about shared purpose, creating inclusive environments and trust. Then challenges are established through a leadership mindset, which you'll love that chapter, taking action, which is something that I'm all about and then creating a powerful community.

So you can take those ideas and influence the PD that you facilitate and offer your staff. So you'll instantly level up what you're doing, and then I think that you can use that as an evaluation, in terms of experiences you're looking for, right? "Do they have these things baked into the process or not?" And if they don't, maybe you should continue to look so that you can use it. You can use it as a filter and then of course there's a very clear call to action if you don't want to search that out. We have a community that's thriving, at the point of this recording, there's just over 70 principals from around the world that are plugged into the community, and they'll be more by the time this podcast launches.

Angela: Yeah, absolutely.

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Daniel: In my bold vision, to be quite honest, you know Angela, is that this is a leadership tip too, I'll show you. I have a note card that I read every morning and every night and you see, so that's a note card.

Angela: Yeah, I've got it.

Daniel: I put the date on there, April 19th, 2021, and I read to myself that there's 91,000 principals. That's how I knew that when I talked to you earlier. I said that I'll serve 1,200 by the end of 2023 and you know that used to feel super scary. My original goal was 600 because at the time, that was basically 10 times more that I was currently serving.

Then my friend, Jamie Poskin, who's the CEO of TeachFX, out by you in California. He said, "Why not 1,200? Why not 1,200 school leaders?" And just like that my own expansiveness in what I thought possible really increased and I felt super scared. But then when I looked at 91,000 principals and did the math, that's only between 2% to 3%, you know, and so now I'm like, "Am I dreaming too small?" You know, they say you should shoot for the moon and you might land in the stars. Do I get to 1,200 in 2023? I don't know, but I know I'm going to be serving a lot more principals than 70.

Angela: Oh exactly.

Daniel: And so that's already progress and I don't want to limit what I'm capable of. I think it's Bill Gates and you know he's, I don't want to comment on him, but what he says, though, it's still true. Despite decisions that he made personally. He said that we overestimate what we can accomplish in one year and underestimate what we can accomplish in 10.

So this is a longer term three year vision and I'm just going to dream big. The last part I want to unpack for the listeners, because I've done this process before with other goals. Sometimes revenue goals. Actually, I

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wrote a card on April 20th, just a day later about buying a house and we got a house under contract on May 17th and saw the house on May 4th had it under contract on May 17th. So then you get to see, wow this stuff works.

This stuff works. By saying in the morning, that's great, it primes you, but in the evening, you're sort of offering it to your subconscious. So when you go to bed each night, your mind is planning and working on your behalf, as you're sleeping. So when you wake up and you get back, it's almost like an affirmation or putting out into the world what you want to accomplish and it's amazing how this stuff happens. So I kind of went on a tangent that's not in the book at all, the note card thing.

Angela: That's a bonus tip.

Daniel: In the book, there's the levels of the ABC's, plenty of case studies, plenty of practical tips that you can use and reflection questions that are really going to hit you hard. They're going to have you thinking, but you're going to grow as a result. Honestly, reflecting and journaling is maybe the number one way you can grow your emotional intelligence, and the emotionally intelligent leaders are absolutely the best leaders out there.

Angela: Yes, I 1000% agree. I just want to add on the little bonus to put the cards, what I love about this, I've had other people on the podcast and it's always a similar tip, just in a different way, like I just put it on a Post-it. I've had my goal, I put it on the Post-it in my bathroom, so I visually see it every single day and it's amazing. I love the date, I'm going to start adding the date to it. Because then you can see the timeline progress of it all.

But it is fascinating that when you put a goal down onto paper and you review your cards, I'm assuming daily or weekly. Just that action, it's simple, easy, doable and really fast. It doesn't have to be beautiful or

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complicated. It doesn't matter how you do it, it's that you do it and it does work.

Daniel: It's daily, it's morning and night. Something that I just keep front and center, when I'm trying to accomplish and it aligns all your actions too, so that you know what's most important. Then it's easier to get out of the grind of the day to day and the operational stuff, so that you can focus on the bigger picture.

Angela: Yeah, I do think, as we're speaking about goals, I can think back to being a new leader. Being so overwhelmed and feeling like I was underwater, that my day to day actions were more reactive than visionary and proactive. When you have that visual reminder, if it's on a notecard or whatever it's on, and you just center yourself with that in the morning and then again in the evening, it really grounds your energy and it grounds your thinking process in your decision making process, so that you can think about problem solving through the lens of that goal. Would you say that's true?

Daniel: Yeah, I think that's fine.

Angela: Yeah, awesome. Any final words, Daniel?

Daniel: There's a lot of jokes in the book, and I took a risk. My editor said, "Your book is funny," and I was like, "Woo, it works!" I had a lot of fun with it and some of the stuff is super corny. I had myself laughing while reading it, and then you put it out into the world and it was a big risk because Corwin is traditional and established, you know, there's the bureaucracy there, and it worked. So even if you just want to have a few laughs you should pick up the book for sure.

Angela: Yeah. We are recording this in June for my listeners, even though it's going to air, you're hearing it in September. But as you know, I'm really

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pushing the value of fun and inviting people to stop being so serious and so heavy all the time and find the lightheartedness in our jobs and look to the levity and the humor that is school that is school leadership, I mean it's pretty funny. It's a little crazy and pretty funny sometimes, so I love that you took that risk. Because that's what engages people, it's the truth and the authenticity behind, not just the important, heavy stuff, but also the lightheartedness and the fun that we can have with the work that we do.

Daniel: Yeah. Here's one practical tip, but obviously I can't distill 200 pages of content and tips into a podcast, but I want to build and honor what you said about having fun. So one of the activities, one way is that you can open a meeting, for example, would be to pair up people. They have partners, have them bring a piece of paper and something to write with and then have them draw each other without looking at the paper. So you can imagine what those drawings end up looking like. Then you show the other person something like, "Here's what I think you look like," and have a discussion around that and that's just kind of fun. So yeah, it's super fun for sure.

Angela: Sure, those are the kinds of ideas that we want to bring back to school. Especially that we're coming out of COVID and we are going to be back together in person, reconnecting in person, live. Hopefully we can, you know, see each other's smiles and faces again, and that I mean, that's the perfect activity for something like that because we haven't seen one another for a really long time.

Daniel: Yeah, and as you're doing it, you're really paying attention to somebody, right? And the nuances of their presence and how they show up. I mean, you could do a whole podcast on just that activity.

Angela: Exactly, I know. Well, maybe that's for our 200th podcast. We'll have to see. Awesome, Daniel. Thank you for the time. Thanks for offering

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to come back and be on the podcast. I'm so excited for your book, I can't wait to read it.

We'll definitely put the link in the show notes for when it is launching this particular week as this airs, so we'll have the link available for you guys and definitely reach out to Daniel. He's got a great mastermind, he has a mastermind just for women, he has a mastermind for school leaders and a business one, for people like us who are edu-preneurs. He's got a lot to offer.

On my end of the spectrum, I have the one to one personalized coaching program and The Mastermind for my former clients, who are now graduating into Empowered Principal 2.0. So yeah, that's really fun. Lots of resources available and, again, I just thank you for sharing all of your knowledge and wealth and I always appreciate time spent with you.

Daniel: Alright, the pleasure was all mine, Angela, thanks for having me on the show again and congrats on 196 episodes.

Angela: Wow, thank you, thank you. We'll get to 196 more.

Daniel: That's right.

Angela: OK. Alright, take care, have a good one. Okay bye.

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