

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 198.

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.

Hello my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday. How are you? I am so good. I have been working through some really challenging thoughts about myself and my business and coaching and school leadership. I have been in the river of misery as my master coach says. But I feel also this sense of evolvment in my own self-concept and evolvment in the people I'm working with. I'm seeing the impact of this work. I feel so energized and excited by the thought that we are changing education one school leader at a time.

We are looking at the way we approach education and leadership, our thoughts around it, our belief systems around it, what we think is possible, what really matters in education like we talked about last week, and where we want to go. Creating the future of education not by looking at the past to define what's possible or what we should be doing or what we should be teaching or what we value, like test scores and academics only. Prioritizing them only. I'm inspired by my Mastermind group who are looking at other ways we measure our growth and our success and what it means to be an educator who takes in all of that day.

I just got off the call with my own empowered principal Mastermind. These are students of mine who have coached one on one with me for at least one year who are now evolving into level 2.0 I like to call them. They have the basics of the coaching tools down and the strategies, and now we are collaborating as a mastermind on what it means to be an empowered principal. What that looks like in thought and in mindset and in emotional

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

wellbeing and in work life balance and in high results at their schools and not just a focus on academics.

So today we're going to talk about why it's safe to go big. We're going to look at playing it safe versus going big. Like why do we play safe? What's the value in that? Why is it enticing to play safe? Then why it's enticing to go big. Okay. I've been doing this work myself. So I'm really sharing with you my own study of myself.

I'm studying the way I'm thinking, the way I'm feeling, the way I'm showing up, the type of work I'm doing, the type of offers I'm making, how I'm showing up on social media for all of you, how I'm showing up in the podcast, in the Facebook group. Noticing areas where I'm playing it safe or where I'm going big and selling myself on all of it. So let me share with you how this breaks down.

Okay. So the first step, at least for me, was allowing myself to be in the slow burn of learning. It's okay to be in the slow burn. What I mean by that is as a school leader, you are in it. It feels like things are going very slow. The pain of being a new school leader or the pain of being even a veteran leader in the midst of COVID, in a pandemic, is a long slow burn.

This pandemic is not gone. We had really hoped it would be gone by the end of last year so we could come into this school year and go back to normal and have things feel like they did before. That's not what's happening. We are in the middle of it, if not even thicker into it because we have a year of anticipation and hope and wanting it to be over and it's not.

So we're in the slow burn. We're in the slow burn of learning how to be a school leader. We're in the slow burn of evolving through a pandemic and what education looks like as a result of that and how education has changed or needs to change, is desiring change. I firmly believe that this pandemic happened not just at a medical level, right. There's a

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

psychological evolution happening. There's an emotional evolution happening. There's a physical evolution happening in our world.

I want to embrace this pandemic in my mind from the sense of what am I learning? How am I growing? How is this a benefit? One of the benefits I truly believe in is that education has been long overdue for talking about how we're playing it safe and how we're pretending in ways just to stay in our zone of comfort versus going big.

I just want to say off the bat. Going big I don't mean more work, overworking, hustling, trying to get more done in less time. All of that energy that's really graspy, hustley, needy, coming from a scarce mindset.

I'm talking about going big in ways that are courageous and different and actually include things like slowing down, doing less, not focusing only on academics. Making emotional wellbeing the priority. Making staff morale the priority. Making lifestyle decisions that include work/life balance and that our physical health, mental health, emotional health, they're all intertwined. Our social health. Creating really socially connected relationships. Being able to have conversations where we have differences of opinion. All of this has been presented to us throughout COVID.

Allow yourself to be in the slow burn and let that be okay. So what I had to do, I don't like being in the slow burn. I want to rush through just like everybody else and get to the part where everything feels great and happy, and I know what I'm doing. I'm achieving the results that I want in the timeframe that I want them. So when it's not happening, what am I thinking? I'm resisting on top of not achieving. So I want you to know that if you feel like you're in the slow burn, that is a part of the process and that's okay.

So I had to sell myself on why it's okay to play it safe, why it's okay to go slow and be in the slow burn. So here's what I came up with. Being in the

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

slow burn gives you time for all the other aspects of your life. So if you feel like you are not accomplishing professional goals as quickly as you'd like, notice that when you are in the slow burn, you're in the long game.

So you're not in it for those short immediate wins or to push yourself or hustle your staff and your teachers to hurry up quickly and get to the goal because you're looking at it from a bigger lens, a bigger perspective. You're not pushing hard and working all the time. You are allowing yourself to have work as one aspect of your life and then allow time for all the other aspects. For self-care, for rest, for vacations, for family time, for friend time, for personal time, for one on one time with yourself. Giving yourself all kinds of time in all the different aspects of your life. So the slow burn allows for that.

It also allows you to create space for you to step into your new self-concept. So what I mean by that is when you're a new school leader and you are feeling all of the discomfort of being new and not knowing what to do and wanting to be the leader who feels competent and calm and confident and knows what they're doing and has routines and systems in place that feel really good.

Being in that slow burn is where you slow yourself down and say, "Okay. What is it that I want? What's the process for making that my reality? How do I create myself to become the person who has those systems? Who doesn't overwork, who balances her life, who has fun in addition to work." You give yourself time and space to step into that new self-concept and practice it. It's not an overnight process. Giving yourself plenty of time and letting it be a slower burn is okay. It allows you to build up those systems. It allows you to work through fears and lean into new beliefs.

So one of the things I teach my clients is that they have four primary assets. Their brain, their time, their resources meaning their money or their physical resources available to them, tools, and then they have other

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

people, human resources. Those four assets are what we want to evolve our belief systems around. So we want to think about how we think about time, how we spend our time, what we think about money and resources, how we spend our money and resources.

What we invest in. Why we do that. Why we invest in our brain, in ourself, in our growth. How we relate to other people and connect with them and build them up so that their capacity to contribute to the world magnifies. Because when they're magnified as teachers, it magnifies us as leaders and, of course, magnifies students. So we have time to work through our fears and our worries and our doubts and the lies our brain tells us or the stories we've been told. We get to rewrite those stories in a way that empowers us, that serves us, and it helps us serve others.

Another reason the slow burn is okay. You get to capture the process. I was just coaching a client on this right now. He had the courage to slow his team down and not try to do every professional development on the moon in the first two days of the school year. You know how you have that time before school starts when you're with your teachers. They're a captive audience, and your superintendent says you've got two days. I want you to cover all of these 20,000 things.

Well, this principal decided, "I'm going to slow down. That's not what my staff needs. They need slow. Slow and steady. We're slowing down. We're going to do the slow burn. We're going to talk about emotional health and wellness for my staff because that's what they need right now. They don't want to talk about MTSS. They're not ready to take on learning a new curriculum when they're still recovering from the experience of teaching during a pandemic."

So he had the courage. He sold himself on why slowing down was better. As a part of this, what ended up happening is no. The superintendent was super jazzed that he was slowing down, but as he's slowing down his PLCs

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

are becoming highly effective because of the slowdown. So I said to him, “Be sure you're capturing the process.”

So when you're learning how to be a new principal, notice the process you're using to be a new principal. If you are a veteran principal and you're working on creating a legacy at your school, you're wanting to fulfill a vision, capture the process you're using. Going a little slower and being in that slow burn and having that vision in front of you and wanting it so badly and so urgently.

Letting yourself feel that want, that desire to get the goal but also capturing the process you're using to get there is helping you prepare for that growth. So that when you hit that vision, you grab it. You celebrate it. You own it fully before you jump to the next goal, the next problem to solve. Because the brain is always going to be looking for what's the next thing? What's the next thing? You want to be prepared for that growth. What happens when you make it, when your school does awesome? Then what? You want to decide that ahead of time. So playing it safe and doing the slow burn is okay.

Now, then we get into looking at how the slow burn keeps us safe. How we use it as a buffer to protect ourselves from going outside of our zone of discomfort. So how the slow burn keeps us safe. In our minds, right. I'm using this to share with you how it protects us in our brain. We have this perceived danger out there, and our brain's like, “Let's do this in order to stay safe because it's very dangerous, very scary, and we might die.”

So when you think about your primary assets—your money, your time, your brain resources, your intellect, your savviness, your brilliance, and then your human resources out there. When you think about all of those assets, we want to stay slow and in the slow burn and pretend to be confused and overwhelmed and indulge in those emotions that don't serve us at a high level because we believe it will protect our time or it will protect our money

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

or resources available to us. Or it will protect us from having to deal with people or it will protect us from having to learn the hard thing.

When we stay in a slow burn as a buffering technique to keep us safe, we want to stay in the routines we know. We just want to know what to do, what to expect, and how to handle everything. So we're going to stay put. That means we don't require ourselves to change.

When you stay in the slow burn as a buffering, there's a time and a place to be in the slow burn, but you'll know you're in the slow burn when the reason you're there is because you don't think you have enough time. Or you don't think you have the money to invest in yourself or in your profession or in your personal life for whatever reason. Whether getting a coach to lose weight, getting a coach for your professional goals, getting support on your financial planner or getting a house cleaner. Paying for delivery service so that you don't have to spend the time doing that.

When you're looking at your resources, you're spending your time, spending your money, spending your brain power, your energy and thought energy. Spending your time connecting with people, we feel like if we go too fast, it's going to eat away at either our time or we'll lose money, or we won't have the resources available to us. We think that going big means a loss of something we want. A loss of our time. A loss of money in the bank. A loss of the resources.

If we use up our resources at school this year, what will happen for next year, right? We get into scarcity mindset when we think that staying small and staying slow is going to reserve our resources. It also helps keep us safe from an emotional standpoint. Because if we don't have to change, we don't have to feel any bad feels. If we don't change or if we stay small and people don't see us, we'll have less criticism.

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

We are wired to avoid negative emotion. Our job as evolved school leaders, empowered principals, our job is to teach our brain how to create safety from a mental emotional standpoint. So being in the slow burn as a buffer avoids having to learn about new things. The pain of learning, you know how hard it is to learn something new. We've all been learning new things in a hard way over the last two years. Staying in our comfort zone avoids that.

We also hide from our past mistakes, our past negative thoughts, negative actions, the misconceptions we've had. We can avoid thinking about where we've been wrong or how we did it wrong or the mistakes that we made.

Finally, staying in that slow burn doesn't invite us to develop new relationships. We stay in comfortable circles. This is why you'll see teachers who teach the same grade level at the same school in the same district for 40 years. Or why people won't go from one district to another or they're afraid to go from elementary to middle school.

There are people out there who are trying it all, like being at the carnival and trying all the rides. Then there's other people who just ride the rollercoaster and that's all they ride, or the Ferris wheel or whatever. Merry go round. So we stay in our zone of comfort to keep us safe.

I'd like to sell your brain on why it's safe to go big quickly. When I say quickly, I mean now. Why it's okay and safe to be the best version of yourself right now. Why waiting isn't a good option. Why the time is now to allow yourself to evolve into the person you want to be at an expedited rate.

So when you're thinking about what it means to go as a school leader, you're talking about advancing your career, advancing yourself as a leader. Advancing the way you think about yourself as a leader. Stepping into that concept of I am a leader. People follow me. They want what I have to offer. They listen to me. They love me. They'll follow anything. They're faithful,

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

loyal teachers and fans of me as a leader. That I'm using this position of authority, this leadership position, for the greater good.

You're advancing yourself. You're leaning more into yourself. You're investing more into you so that you can contribute more to those you lead, to those you teach. Your students, your families, your communities, your school, your culture, the staff at large. All of those people are empowered when you invest in yourself.

So what I mean by going big is being the highest best leader you can be. Being the most balanced, happy, functioning leader you can be. This is what coaching offers. It's expedited growth, which can feel really, really scary. We sometimes want to just sit back and watch the rides on the sidelines. We don't want to buckle up and get in the seat. It feels really scary. Of course it does.

But what's on the other side of that? Expedited growth as a leader means there's more of your top assets available to you. When you invest in you, when you invest in yourself as a leader, you invest in your teachers, making them the best versions of themselves. When you invest in your top assets, your time, your money, your resources, your brain, your people around you who are following you and will support you, you get more.

The more resources and assets that you have available to you, the more you can contribute and add value to education, to students' lives, to families. You are changing the trajectory of the humans you're serving by being in your best space. By getting out of the safety zone and allowing yourself to go big. To becoming that person who just does.

So this expedited growth for you as a leader means you welcome new routines. You don't want to stagnate and be in the old comfort zones all of the time. New routines should be welcomed because they offer us the solution you're looking for.

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

The new routines are how you get results. So if you're a person who wants to lose 20 pounds and the current routine of your life is not getting you there, the solution is inviting in a new routine into your life that may include walking every morning or taking a run or taking a yoga class. Moving your body in some way or eating different kinds of foods. It's a new routine. The solution to any problem is a new routine.

The way that we create new routines is by thinking differently. What's in it for me if I invite this new routine into my life, into my space? When you think about that over the course of time, the more willing you are to welcome in new routines, the more solutions you create, the faster results you create, the more happiness and enjoyment, the more connections you make with yourself and others, and the bigger and better life becomes. It's okay to have a completely new routine.

I want you to think about it this way. If you already had all the money in the world, how would you spend your time? I'm talking on the daily. Like when we think oh if I had millions of dollars, I wouldn't work. I would just travel the world and donate money and go do good things and just feel good all of the time, but that's not the truth. The truth is that if you had a lot of money, you would have a lot of time to spend, and you would want to be mindful of how you spent that time.

So we think what we want is all the money. We want to get all the money, make more money, save our money, hold onto our money and our resources around us. When we don't invest those resources, they stagnate. They go flat. They don't grow. If you don't grow, they don't grow. So if you had all the money already, what would you be thinking? How would you be spending your time?

We think the goal is more time and more money, but if we really had an overabundance of both, which we totally have the ability to have an overabundance of time and money. Our brains kind of have a hard time

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

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

thinking about what would we really do. If work wasn't an option, how would you spend your day? There's only so much shopping and so many vacations you can take before you're going to want to contribute value to the world in some way.

Think about that in the perspective of having already had it. Having already created all of those resources and believing that they're always available and abundant to you. Then what would you be thinking? It's so fascinating to play that game with yourself.

Another reason that it's safe to go big quickly is that change is happening one way or the other. We think it's better to play it safe and stay in our current routines because we think we don't have to experience the pain of change. But here's what's true.

The truth is that change is happening regardless. It's happening every single day no matter what. You are getting physically older every single day. Your brain is learning something every single day. The people around you are changing and evolving every single day. Money flows in and out all around the world every day.

Change is happening. Whether you want to believe that or not, whether you stay in your old routines or not, you still are changing. You already know how to experience change because you're in it right now. It's happening as we speak. As you listen to this podcast, your brain is changing the way it thinks. That's why you're listening. You want to change.

So the difference between playing small and going big is that you are more intentional and in control of the kind of change that you want to personally experience. You get to take charge of the change and decide what kind of change you want. Do you want change that happens to you and comes at you and feels very passive? This is just life happening to me, and I have no control. Or do you want to be the person who intentionally sits down and

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

plans out, “Okay change happens. That’s the reality. What am I going to do about it?” It’s active versus passive change.

One other point that I want to make this in terms of safety. Like for me, safety matters. I have to feel safe in order to move forward. So I have to create safety for myself. One of the things I've realized throughout the last year is that my thought was if I have new routines, if I learn something new, if I try a new job, if I expand my self-concept then I'm going to have to give something up. The good parts of my life will have to be taken away. In order to evolve, in order to have new routines, to become a new person, I have to let go of everything.

There is some truth to that, but here is also the truth. You don't have to ever let go of anything you don't want to. Now, I will say that we have to let go of good in order to get to great. We have to let go of great in order to get to exceptional and empowerment. But that doesn't mean if there are aspects of your life that are wonderful and that are working and that you love, it doesn't mean that you have to throw everything out. It just means that you refine and adjust the routines to bring more of what you love into your life more of the time.

So you're not throwing the baby out with the bathwater in this one. You are picking and choosing decisively and deliberately what is working, what's not, and what you want to adjust. You are in full control of that.

Now, let's talk about criticism. A lot of times we play small, and we hold ourselves back because we're afraid the more people we're exposed to, the more critics we will have, the more feedback we'll get, the more negatively, the more haters. Listen. When you play small, there is a critic there. It's you. When you play small, the self-critic comes out and your brain is telling you all of the things. The regret, the beating yourself up, the self-deprecation.

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

Then you hide that because you don't want people to know you're doing that to yourself, which makes you play even smaller. It spirals you down into the smallness being as small and unseen as possible. When you realize criticism happens no matter what and the bigger you get the more critics that are out there, even if that were true my first response to that is who cares.

In the end of it all, would you rather be highly successful, happy with your life, loving what you do, making an impact, changing the field of education, changing the world, however big you want to be. Writing books, being a presenter, whatever it is that you want that you don't think is possible. It feels too big for your britches so to speak. Would you rather go for that life and have the big life and be highly successful, or would you rather spend your life people pleasing any potential critics? Which choice feels better?

Going big doesn't matter if you're getting the life that you want. Who cares what those people think? People who criticize people who are big are criticizing themselves for not being big. Then they're just blaming people outside of themselves. Going big for you means more money for you, more time for you, more connections, more life, more experiences, more contribution to the world because of your advanced mind.

So at the end of it, who cares about a couple of critics, a couple of haters? It's always a reflection of themselves. I know it still stings. I'm not saying who cares? It doesn't hurt. It doesn't feel bad. When somebody criticizes you, the reason it feels bad is there's a little part of you that it feels true for. So when people are criticizing, first of all they're criticizing you one way or another.

I can tell you right now. There's people out in the world who hate this podcast. They don't like me. They don't like the concepts. They don't like the way my voice sounds, whatever. They don't like me, and they never will. They're already out there in the world, and that's fine. They can totally

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

hate on me. Love them anyways. Love them so much because they know I'm not their people, and they don't come knocking on my door. I don't have to interact with them.

Then there's the people who hate on me and let me know about it. Totally fine too because I believe in myself. I believe in this message. I believe in my content, in my offer, in this work. I believe this is changing education one school leader at a time. I believe I'm a pioneer in the field of education as a life coach. I'm one of the only school leader coaches out there who has been doing it for this long, who has this specific offer, and who has the experience. I have the full package.

So when people criticize me, they're welcome to that criticism. When it hurts, it's because of something I'm thinking is true about myself. When somebody says, "You don't know what you're talking about." And I think, "Yeah they're right. I don't know what I'm talking about." That's when criticism feels bad. If someone says to me, "You don't know how to be a life coach. You don't know what you're talking about." I don't take offense to that because I don't believe it. Do you see that?

So anytime we feel the sting of criticism from other people, it's just tapping into a part that was already self-criticizing. It was already there. So it's good. You want to know. Let's just uncover those thoughts now and learn how to deal with the critics, both the self-criticism and the criticism from others.

Coaching tools give you the capacity to build up your belief in yourself and have your own back and trust yourself and deal with the criticism that's out in the world. That's what we do in coaching. It's safe to be new. I've talked about how to be new. There's a webinar available out there. For my clients, they have access to it at any time. You know this. It's safe to be new, to not know how. We don't believe that that's true.

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

When you embrace being new, embrace not knowing how, and show up fully as that new person who doesn't know. Or even more so, being the veteran who doesn't know. Everyone's new at something. It's the price of admission to a big life. Willingness to be new is everything.

The more you're willing to be new and you pay that price of admission, "I'm new. Don't know what I'm doing. Awkward and uncomfortable. Should have known that. Woops. Okay. Learn it for next time." That whole process, the more you're willing to do that, you create a safe space to be new. You make it permissible to be new. So allow yourself to be new.

Finally, it's safe to connect with more people and have more influence and create a bigger impact. I want you to believe that. It's safe to connect. It's safe to put yourself out there. The worst thing that can happen is somebody criticizes you and you feel an emotion. What coaching will do is help you process that emotion and then decide for yourself. Is that person's statement true about me or not? If it's true, do I like it?

If not, can I change it? How can I change it? Working through my thoughts, using the STEER cycle, using the life coach school models, using all of the tools I have available to me to empower myself to get back into the slow burn. This is where this comes full circle. You get back into the slow burn and all of a sudden, you're realizing that in order to go fast, you have to go slow. But you have to be willing to go fast and let yourself be as big as possible.

Go out there. Be as empowered as you can. I invite you into the empowered principal one on one coaching program. I will teach you all of these tools. I will sell you on you. We will have an amazingly fun year, and we will get you through to the other side. Let's go big. Talk to you next week. Take care. Bye.

Ep #198: Slow Burn vs. Going Big

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit angelakellycoaching.com where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.