

Ep #217: Asking for What You Want



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 217.

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.

Hey there. You've been thinking about it, so let's start talking about it. Leaving School Leadership is a webinar that I've created for any school leader who is contemplating leaving their current position but can't imagine it being possible or even where to start. Trust me, it's completely possible. I've done it myself, and I've helped other principals do the same. I created a step by step process that you can follow that will help you decide exactly what you want, get clear on what you don't, and make a plan that doesn't freak you out.

During the Leaving School Leadership webinar, I will walk you through each of these steps and answer any questions that you have. I'm also going to be sure to tell you all of the pitfalls that I ran into and how to avoid them, and the things that came up along the way that you don't expect once you're on the other side.

One of the things I'm not going to be telling you is why you should stay, how you should carry on, and what will happen to the schools if you leave. Look, you've already been told that. I know you're really tired of the pep talks too. You guys are exhausted. You don't want to make a career decision from shame, obligation, or guilt, or fatigue. You want to make it from clarity and honesty.

That can only happen when you're in a space that allows you to tell yourself the truth of what you want for you, for your future, for your career.

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You're going to be so relieved to know that you're not trapped, and that you don't need anybody else's permission to move forward in your career.

So I'm going to share with you five decisions you need to make when determining your career's future and the strategies behind these five decisions. I'll cover all the obstacles that come up and what to do about them. So be sure to register for the Leaving School Leadership webinar. Even if you're planning to stay, the webinar will help you gain clarity on what you want and what you don't, and how to plan with intention your career moving forward.

Help is on the way. Be sure to sign up for the Empowered Word email list to get all of the information. The link is in the show notes on signing up for the email list to get all of the details, and the registration link is below. Registration is happening now. You must register ahead of time to attend. The webinar will be held on Thursday February 24th at 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time which is 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

You've gotta sign up. You've gotta attend live because there won't be a replay, but I promise you you will have clarity. And you will have a plan moving forward in your school leadership career whether you want to stay, whether you want to go, how to go, when to go, all of it. I will tell you everything. So I'll see you at the webinar. Enjoy the show.

Hello my empowered leaders. Welcome the *Empowered Principal* podcast. Today's topic is calling Asking for What You Want. I got this concept or this idea I should say from one of my master coaches. I was on a call listening to her talk about helping another person ask for what she wanted.

I found it fascinating, and it made me think about you as a school leader. Wondering wow there are so many things as a school leader that we have to ask for in a day. We have to ask things of ourselves, we have to ask

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things of other people, and we are asked by others all day long for output, for decisions, for tasks to be completed, right?

So there's a whole thing that goes on with asking for what we want and being able to receive being asked a question and how we make that decision. Are we going to fulfill that request or not? So there's many things that we ask for in our lives.

I was thinking about what kinds of things do we ask for? We ask people to do things for us. We ask of our teachers to take action. Like asking them to complete lesson plans, asking them to go out to yard duty, asking students to stand in line while we wait for lunch in the cafeteria. Then there's tangible things we ask for. We ask for things like gifts or we ask for things like money. We ask PTA to raise money and to give us the money so we can implement something at our school.

Personally, I think about what kinds of things we ask for. We ask for all kinds of things. We ask for people to be our friends. We ask people to date us. We ask people to go run errands. We ask our kids to pick up their socks or help with dinner or cover yard duty. Like I think about all the things we're asking for. There's so many things, right?

And as the school leader, you're asking people to hire you as a school leader and to pay you. You're asking them to give you a raise. You're asking your boss to provide you with professional development funds for coach. You're asking them to provide you with the resources you need to run your school. So there's things that you ask for directly, and then there's other things that you might ask indirectly just through your actions.

So when you think about all of the potential outcomes that happen when you ask for something that you want, one of three things is possible. Number one, you ask somebody for something and they say yes. That's the best case scenario, right? You ask your kids to do something and they

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actually do it. You ask your teachers to turn in X, Y, Z form by the end of school tomorrow and everybody does it. It's amazing, right? Or you ask your boss if you can have a stipend for social emotional learning programming and they say yes. It's great, right.

Then option two is when you ask for what you want, and the person you're asking says no. That is not the best case scenario. It's not our preference. We want to be told yes. Number three, the third potential outcome for questioning and asking for what we want is that we don't ask. We hide behind what we want. We don't ask the question at all.

Think about this. How many times have you wanted something but you didn't ask for it? How many of you want to make more money, but you don't ask for a raise? How many of you want coaching but don't ask your superintendent if they will pay for your coaching services? How many of you want your husband or your spouse or your partner to buy you flowers for your birthday, but you don't ask? Or you want your mother-in-law to stop calling five times a day, but you don't ask, right?

So when you think about the options, you can ask and they say yes, you can ask and they say no, or you just don't ask in the first place. Which of these three is the most likely to get you what you want? The obvious answer is by asking, right? Asking gives you at least a 50/50 percent chance that somebody might say yes.

Because when you ask somebody for what you want, they're either going to say yes or going to say no. If you choose option three by not asking, that means you're leaving it up to chance, and you're giving your power to create what you want in your life up to the powers that be in the world, right? Other people.

Asking for what you want is a leadership skill. You need to develop this as a school leader. You want to develop it as a school leader because your

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job is all about asking people to do things. It's asking your boss. It's asking up. It's ask your staff. Asking of your kids and of your community. You're always asking questions. Asking of your family. So having the skill of being comfortable and able and being willing, having the courage to ask for what you actually want, it will benefit you in every area of your life.

So if it's such a great skill, why don't we do it? Why are we uncomfortable with it? Here are four reasons I could come up with. Number one, the obvious one is rejection. We don't want to be told no. It feels bad. If you go to your boss and you're like, "Can I have a raise?" And he says, "No." Aw that feels bad, I want a raise. I want to make more money. It feels bad. We get rejected.

Or you go to a job interview. Hey, look at me. I'm amazing. I would like to work for you. "No thank you." That hurts. Our brain makes rejection mean that somebody is rejecting us personally. We take it very personally. We make it mean we're not good enough and something's wrong with us. We better study ourselves and fix the problem because something's wrong and it needs fixing.

Versus just making it mean that they rejected the request. They're not rejecting you. They're rejecting the request. Our brain takes that rejection, that no as a form of you aren't good enough. Something's wrong with you personally or inherently.

Another reason we're uncomfortable when we ask for what or reasons we don't ask for what we want is that we don't really know what we want. We have a hard time asking when we don't even really know what it is that we want. We're not clear. We're not specific. We're not concise. We don't know exactly what it is. So when we ask, it's kind of nebulous. We might ask the question.

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Then you know. When you ask teachers to do a job for you and then somebody steps up and does it, but it's not the way you wanted it done. It's not that they didn't want to do it right. It's that you weren't clear in your request. You didn't know specifically how to articulate it, or you just didn't really know what you wanted.

It's like when someone says, "What do you want for your birthday?" And you're like oh I don't know. Like a scarf would be nice. I really need a new scarf. That tells them nothing. That doesn't tell them the color, the length, the style, the fabric that you want. Is it for an outfit? Is it for skiing? Like what is the scarf for, right? You want to be specific, right?

Number three, asking is uncomfortable because we have the thought that it's selfish. We think that asking for what we want is a selfish act. It can feel like you're putting your needs, your desires above somebody else's. It feels very selfish to say what we want and ask for what we want. The fourth reason it's uncomfortable is because when we do ask and we're thinking the thought I'm being selfish by asking for this, we feel like it's putting a burden on other people. We think that oh, if I ask for what I want, it's gonna be a burden to somebody else.

What I've noticed that we think this way when we think that other people asking us to do something is a burden. So we think it's a burden to ask somebody else to do something for us if we feel burdened by people requesting what they want from us. Do you notice that? We think that asking for what we want is going to negatively impact other people, and we secretly have the thought like when other people ask me, it's a negative impact for me as well. So it goes both ways. So you think it's a burden to you and to them.

But let me ask the question. What is the cost of not asking for what we want? What is the price that we pay when we don't have the courage or we don't hone the skillset of asking for what we want?

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Number one, we reject ourselves ahead of time. We think that the worst thing that can happen is that somebody tells us no and we're going to feel disappointment or we're going to feel rejection. In response to that what we do is we don't ask the question. All that is is rejecting ourselves ahead of time.

When we don't ask, there is no room, no possibility for there to be a yes. We don't want to hear no from other people to the point that we tell ourselves don't ask. But guess what? You just have solidified the no. It's a 100% chance of no. So when you are thinking to yourselves, "I'm not going to ask that because they might say no," that's the craziest reason not to ask. You're telling yourself no ahead of time.

Number two, we never get clearer on exactly who we are. We don't really know ourselves. We don't know what we are and who we are and what we like and what we don't and what we want. So then we don't ask for what we want because we don't really know ourselves.

So part of this is about when we're not willing to ask for what we want, when that's coming from a place of not knowing ourselves, the cost of not asking for what we want means we don't get to know ourselves. We turn our control and our power over our lives to other people to decide for us. For them to tell us who we are and what our style is and what we want and what we don't want. This is when life feels like it's happening to you versus happening from you, happening for you. So you want to get clear on who you are and what you want and what you don't.

Number three, the third cost of not asking for what you want is resentment. We think it's selfish to ask for what we want. So we stay silent and we fume internally that we don't have what we want, or we feel sorry and sad for ourselves that we can't have what we want. Poor me, I can't have that. I can't have what I want. We see other people out there getting what they want, and we think they're being selfish.

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But really we're being selfish by expecting other people to know what we want, and we're being judgmental of others when we resent them for being courageous enough to ask for what they want or have what they want, and then cry a pity party when we don't have it. That is selfish. It's selfish to expect yourself to have what you want without having to go through the process of asking.

The price of admission for getting what you want out of your career, out of your life, out of all the areas of your life is to go through the process of asking. It's to have the experience of the process, which sometimes feels awkward and uncomfortable. It involves being told no. It involves building up the skillset of knowing what you want and what you have to offer in exchange for what you want, and to go through the courage and to have to feel the courage of asking and then letting things feel awkward until somebody can make a decision. And being willing to be told no without making it mean something's gone wrong.

Number four, the cost of not asking for what we want is burdening others and yourself. Think about this. If you don't ask for what you want, the burden then goes to the other person. People want to know what you want, especially as a leader. It's so much easier for your teachers to know what to do, to know what they need to do, to understand what it is exactly that you want from them.

People want to follow your lead, and the easiest way to follow your lead is to ask them specifically for what you want them to do. Asking people for what you want when you specifically know what you want and you're clear in your request can make things so much easier for them,

So I think of my husband trying to buy me a birthday gift for today, and he'll always say like what do you want? He wants to know exactly what I want. He doesn't want to go have to spend hours going to the mall or looking online trying to guess what I want, and he doesn't want me to say, "Oh I

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don't know. Just get whatever you want." Then he buys me something and I'm like, "Oh thanks." Right?

Or if I just say I guess I could use some new shoes, he's like, "I'm not going to buy you new shoes. I have no idea the size, the fit, the color, the style." He's like, "You girls with your shoes." He's not gonna buy me shoes. Like it's too generic.

My husband wants me to know what I want. He wants me to say I want this brand of perfume in this size. Here's the color. Here's a picture of what it looks like. You can get it over at Nordstrom. Please go. Please get me what I want. People want to know what you want. Okay?

So your chances of getting what you want are much higher the more clarity you have about what you want and the more articulate you are. Details are not a burden. They make life easier for you and them.

So how do you school leader develop the skill of asking for what you want on a regular basis? So let's breakdown the obstacles in the way of asking. Number one, we talked about rejection. I know we've already talked about this, but your fear of being rejected, it's a human universal rear. We all feel it. Guess what. You know how to be rejected. How do we know? You've had it happen before. Every human on the planet has been told no, has been told no thank you, has been broken up with, has been denied. You can handle the feelings that come with being told no.

No, they're not pleasant. Disappointment doesn't feel good. But you can handle disappointment. I want you to consider what you're making the no mean. If you get very deeply hurt and it spins you out of commission because you get a no, you want to understand what am I making this no mean? Am I making it something super personal about myself?

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Of course there are times when there is a no that feels very personal. Your superintendent telling you, “No, I'm not going to give you resources for SEL program, that doesn't feel good, and you're disappointed. You're going to try and figure out how else you can get those resources to get the programs you need for your kids.

But that's a different no than somebody saying, “No, I don't want to be married to you. No I don't want to be your friend. No I don't want to spend the rest of my life with you.” I don't know. I can't think of anything else. I just think like when you have a personal relationship or a friendship, it feels very different. Like having a friend say no she can't meet you for lunch because she's got an all-day meeting, you're not going to make it mean something about her or something terrible about you. You're just like oh okay. Bummer. Let's catch each other next time. No big deal, right?

So the more we process rejections and the more we're willing to feel the emotions that come with them and study the thoughts we have about them, the more often we're going to dust ourselves off and ask for what we want again. We're going to notice. We're making it mean this. Oh what else could be true? How is it not a problem that I was told no? How do I go forward and continue getting no's until I get the yes?

Number two, lack of clarity. Not knowing what we want has a very simple solution. Keep asking yourself what you want and let the honest answer come to the surface. Now if you're a person who's ignored or repressed your desires for a long time, you might need to give them some time to come up to the surface. You need to keep asking yourself over and over. You need to trust that you're going to acknowledge them and ask for them.

Your desires want to be seen and heard and respected. If you keep pushing them away, they're not going to come to the surface. If you're like you know what, I apologize. I'm here. I'm going to listen. What do I really

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want? What is it that I want most? Let it come to the surface and say I see you. I acknowledge you.

You don't have to take action on every single desire, but you can acknowledge it and make a conscious decision whether or not you're going to pursue asking for what you want. Sometimes the answer's yes. Sometimes it's no. Sometimes it's not now. It's going to be at a later date.

Number three, the obstacle of feeling like things are selfish. If you think you shouldn't have wants or desires, I hear this mostly from women by the way. Not all but mostly. Where they think that they should be grateful for what they have and not yearn for more, not want. They feel like they can't ask for it because they shouldn't want it.

I want to invite you if you're that person to ask yourself why do you think not having wants is a good thing? How does it benefit you and others? We as humans are wired to want, to have desires, to be explicit about what we do want in our lives and what we don't. What we want as school leaders and what we don't.

The more you explore that, the more articulate you can be to those you're leading. When you believe you are worthy of having the wants that you have and the desires that you're trying to create, the results you're trying to create. When you think those are worthy, this is really an exercise about it being worthy and you being worthy to receive and achieve. You're going to expand and enhance the experience of your leadership career and your life, and your ability to lead will be more expansive. You want to show others the way. Be clear on what you want, no apologies. The more specific the better.

P.S. there is nothing that you can want that is too much, too audacious, too greedy. There is a reason that your heart desires it. There's a reason you want what you want. When you walk into the campus and you want it to be

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clean and tidy and presentable, that's not too much to ask. If you want to make more money as a school leader, that's not too audacious or too greedy.

I'm going to talk about how to create more money as a school leader. I'm going to talk about that throughout the month of April. April is going to be all things money, money, money. I'm helping school leaders create more value so that they can create more money. If you want something just because you want it, that's okay too. I give you full permission. Please give yourself permission to want and to ask for what you want.

Finally this obstacle of believing that you're being a burden to others. I want to tackle this one because I admit. When you are on the receiving end of being asked for something, it can feel like a burden. That's why we have the thought. As a principal, people will ask you all the time for favors all day long. They want your time and attention, and they want tangible things.

Like I think of letters of recommendation. Even now. I have not been a school leader for five years. People are still reaching out to me asking me to write them letters of rec or letters of reference. That is asking me of my time. In my business now, I'm flooded from requests and pitches from people that I don't even know. They want to be a guest on this podcast.

Which by the way, I don't do. I only have people on this podcast that I either know personally or that I want to have on the show. Which might be you one day. So become a client. Get on the podcast. It's going to be so much fun.

So yes asking people can feel like a burden to the person being asked, but you can minimize the impact of the burden. Here's how. You want to do as much of the work for them ahead of time. So I think about my friend Jessica. Whenever we travel, she does all of the work. She plans the trips. She plans out the activities and where we're going and the hotels and the

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car. Like she's so good at it. She does it all. I just get to go and enjoy when she asks me to join her on a trip. I love that.

My teachers, I love this too. This is something that I set up for success and you can do this as well. When teachers would ask me for a recommendation, like a letter of rec, I would say to them send me your resume. Send me an email with all of the accomplishments and the dates you've worked and wherever. Give me as much detail as possible so that I have quick access to all the information I need to write you the best recommendation letter possible.

They would do it. Because the value of my letter would go up when they put the work into their request. So if their request was a letter of recommendation from me, they're going to get the best result when they give me as much information as possible.

Another way that you can mitigate feeling like it's a burden is to build relationships ahead of time. Build relationships with your teachers and your students and your parents before you start asking of them. You can do this at home with your own kids or your partner. You can feel like it's more of a partnership when you are doing this because you love one another, you care about people, and you're in the business of serving.

Your request when you ask for what you want, you want it to be reciprocal. So be open to reciprocating being asked. So you're going to ask people what you want, and you're going to be open to reciprocating their requests when they ask something of you.

I think of asking for what you want as the skill of being in your full empowerment. It's the exercise of being really honest with yourself and telling yourself the truth of what you want without apology. It's also about having the courage to ask for what you want of yourself and of others.

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Being willing to experience this discomfort that can come with asking for what you want.

But ultimately the art and skill of knowing what you want, being specific about it, not being afraid to ask for it, or if you're afraid you at least can exercise courage to ask for it. Being willing to be told no without making it mean something has gone wrong with you personally.

Then processing the disappointment and dusting yourself off and go back and find a way to get a yes. Because I'll tell you this. The only way to get what you want as a leader is by piling up a bunch of no's in order to get the one yes. You're going to get 10 no's before you get a yes. 20 no's. 30 no's. The more no's you can tolerate, the more successes you're going to have. I love you all. Have an amazing week. Talk to you in March. Bye.

If this podcast resonates with you, you have to sign up for the Empowered Principal coaching program. It's my exclusive one to one coaching and mentorship program for school leaders who believe in possibility. This program is designed for principals who are hungry for the fastest transformation in the industry. If you want to create the best connections, impact, and legacy for yourself and your school, the Empowered Principal program was designed for you. Join me at angelakellycoaching.com/work-dash-with-me to learn more. I'd love to support you in becoming an empowered school leader.

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