

# Ep #246: How to Be an Amazing Principal with Even Better Relationships with Maggie Reyes



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 246.

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 empowered leaders. Welcome to today's podcast. I have a very special and a very dear guest on the podcast. She's very near and dear to my heart. She's somebody who speaks to my soul. She is a friend, a colleague. Her name is Maggie Reyes, and she is a coach for women. I think it's type a women who want to have amazing marriages. So she speaks to me in all the ways.

Maggie and I are going to talk about how you, as an empowered principal, can have a beautiful, loving, healthy relationship with your spouse, your partner, at home while also being an empowered leader at school. So Maggie, welcome to the podcast. Can you introduce yourself and tell them a little bit more about who you are and how magical you are?

Maggie: Oh my gosh. Hello, everyone. I am very magical. So I am a master certified life coach. I help type a women have better marriages. Most of the time, I'm working with people who are wildly successful in their professional life. Hello principals listening. The things that make you successful at work are often, not always, but some of those things that make you so wildly successful at work are things that become challenges at home.

So when you're used to delegating, sometimes giving orders in a loving way, that's not a problem. But when you're used to having a team of people who do exactly what you say, when you say it, how you want it, and then

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you go home and try to do that with your spouse, your partner, sometimes we need to change the approach.

Angela: No.

Maggie: So that's where a lot of the bulk of my work is. Then I really I think what I want everyone to know beyond I'm a total nerd. I love continuing education. I've taken a million different classes, and we're in an education podcast. So yes, I am a big fan. I like to use evidence based interventions in the type of coaching that I do. So for those of you who listen to us and want to go deeper, a lot of the things I'm going to quote in terms of evidence based things are from the Gottman Institute, and they research what makes marriages thrive. Then they create interventions based on that. That's one of my biggest influences.

Just like Angela, I do a lot of cognitive behavioral work. So we'll talk a little bit about some of the education behind the things, for those of you who are interested in that. But then we'll talk about really practical ways to just think about how to feel better in your relationship no matter what's going on at school.

Angela: Yes, exactly. So I just want to tell the listeners how this podcast idea, the idea of this podcast came to be. So many, many school leaders are on some type of social media, pick your platform. I happen to be mostly on Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook. I see that principals are posting all kinds of successes and wins and celebrations. There are times where we post things where we're struggling and where we're challenged.

One thing I've noticed is there are people that post comments about unintended results, things that they did not anticipate that would be impacted by their decision to step into a leadership role in education. One

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of those unanticipated outcomes has been the impact on their relationships, either with their spouse, their husband or wife, their partner, their family.

But really the pain point that I noticed is that there are school leaders out there whose marriages, they feel like their marriage is suffering as a result of taking on the leadership role. Or perhaps the marriage has already at a point where it might be dissolving or going through the process of dissolving, and a lot of pain and suffering around the dissolution of a marriage, or a relationship a long term relationship, where they believe that the job was that kind of what started maybe this trend down.

So I immediately thought of Maggie. She is my go to person for marriage and relationships. I asked her to come on to the podcast and have an open conversation with all of you and myself on what is really going on here? What can we do, what's in our control to manage this prevent this. Maybe like talk about how to prevent it. Then also if there is already something being impacted, what can we do from this point forward?

So Maggie, let's kind of start with there's a lot of brand new school leaders who are jumping into the position. So we're recording this at the end of the summer. This is going to air sometime in early September, which means people are just getting started in their new positions. They are listening thinking, "Oh, I never even considered that maybe the job is going to have an impact on my marriage." What can we talk about that will help them maybe get on the right foot and not have their marriage go down a path that they don't want it to?

Maggie: I think with any job change. So specifically, we're talking to people who are becoming principals or who are now principals. But through your married life, if you're married to somebody for 30 or 40 years, you're gonna

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go through a bunch of job changes. Each of those job changes is going to have its own sort of set of new challenges or new ways of being or new things that are going on.

One of the ways that I think about it is some of my clients practice ethical non-monogamy where they have more than one partner. I always joke around with them that when you have one partner, you can be a little sloppy. Like your boundaries don't have to be perfect. Your communications doesn't have to be great. You can kind of let things slide a little. But if you have more than one partner then all of a sudden you have to be super clear on your boundaries and super clear on your communication. We need to know who is with who doing what on which day. Like you can not be sloppy.

I think the same thing happens when we get promoted or we get into these leadership roles. Like when you're in a role where you just work with the school year. When something is a problem, you take it up the food chain, and you can go home and relax, right? It's very different than when the buck stops with you. If something is a problem, the teachers calling you, the janitorial team is calling you. The kids' parents are, the PTA is. It's like all of these different entities suddenly.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Like the buck stops with you. You have to figure out how to handle all these things. In some ways, it becomes a 24/7 job.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: I think that is the place where we can all sort of take a minute to say okay, I'm committed to my job. It matters to me. This is children, the

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future of humanity is in my hands with these group of people that I'm in charge of in the school. I want to honor and value that, but then how do I incorporate my family or my partner, my own kids, and people that I care about into this thing that's our 24/7 thing?

That's the part where what I would say is kind of like a takeaway is like where am I being sloppy where I can no longer afford to be sloppy? One of the things, I've been in those kinds of 24/7 jobs. I used to work in the cruise industry, and we'd have emergencies or things happen at all hours of the day and night and all that stuff.

I didn't handle it that great, to be honest. I got a burnt out and overwhelmed and didn't set great boundaries. I really learned from that oh, now I have to be really clear. My husband works in IT, and he's an executive that where the buck stops with him when things happen. I remember early in our marriage, so I was the spouse affected by the person, in this case.

He would get called a 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. in the morning because there was some glitch in the computer. He's the person that gets called when the things doesn't work. I remember thinking to him. So everybody like think about your spouse right now, right? I would tell him you get to come in late. You get to change your day. I still have to be at work at 8:30 the next morning no matter how many times you get called at 2:00 a.m., and it's my cool. I was the annoyed person. What they ended up doing was they started a phone tree.

Angela: Oh.

Maggie: It's something that's so simple. Listen, if we work in any capacity with schools, we know about phone trees. But it was something that was so simple that it was like okay, nobody is going to be on call 24/7 every week,

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right? We're gonna rotate who's on call and who's called and when and how. Then the burden is among the whole leadership team, not just he gets called every time. That was immensely helpful.

So what I want to say about that is everyone, where can I no longer afford to be sloppy? What is the simplest way that I can lift my burden a little bit? Okay, so these are very, very simple things we can do. Like oh, I don't have the budget to hire an assistant or to hire somebody else. It's not about that. It's what is the simplest thing that I can do with the resources I already have.

Angela: Exactly. I love that you said this because I think of when we're talking about being sloppy, I think we're talking about like having a lot more slack. So as a teacher you might have built up your capacity to be really time efficient with your time where you know your kids, you know what your lesson plan, you know the prep required, you know which parents you need to speak with or communicate with. You've got that dialed in so you're highly effective with your time, and you've got a lot of slack with your time. So if something does come up, there's time in the day.

When you become a school leader and you don't know what you don't know, whether it's been one year or five years, and you're not really tight with that time, it does feel like the job gets really sloppy because so many demands. You don't know how to prioritize, or you don't know what to say yes and no to. That's when the job just like it's like it just expand.

I think about like foam. Like it just expands into the amount of time that you have given it. The foam starts to leak over. Right? If it's like soap suds, it like bubbles over into personal time and relationship time and self-care and rest time. We respond to that by overworking and not having boundaries around a 2:00 a.m. call or not.

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Maggie: Yes. I want to be really clear that most of the people listening to us, if you've become a school principal, you're probably very meticulous and highly organized. So it's not about you about you being sloppy. It's about having sloppy boundaries. It's about what we say yes and no to, what we agreed to for the school year, how many projects we take on.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: We think it's useful for the kids, so we say yes to it, even though it's really something that no one has time on their plate to address. That's one thing that happened to me in my own career when I was in HR was if it was an interesting project, I wanted to work on it. Then all of a sudden I looked at it was like oh, I have five projects right now. I can really realistically only handle two.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: That was like not my best moment. So I wouldn't say it's not sloppiness in you as a person. It's just how we say yes and no and what we look at. One of my favorite things that my husband and I talk about these things all the time, and he has a team as well that he leads. I have like one assistant. So I don't really have that right now. But he was telling me one of his philosophies is if it doesn't have to be done by me, it should not be done by me.

Angela: Yes.

MAGGIE: When he told me that, it blew my mind. Because I think about this stuff all the time. Obviously as a coach and coaching different leaders in different spaces and CEOs and all this thing. I was like if it doesn't have to be done by me, it should not be done. Every single school leader, if



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you're just starting the job in September, your first task is to look at all the things that are on your plate, and ask yourself does this need to be done by me?

Angela: This is exactly what I teach in the three month plan, school leaders, because I will tell you there are two ways to maximize your time, delegation and constraint. If you cannot look through your list and consider who else might be available to do that task or capable of doing that task. If you're not willing to let go, your plate's going to be overflowing. Other people's plates are going to be a little more empty. But the problem with that is your plate overflows into your marriage and into your relationship.

Maggie: Yes.

Angela: That's where it starts to feel messy, and your partner, because they don't understand your job or how its managed or how to put boundaries in it, they just see it as it's the jobs' fault because they don't have a clear understanding of what it is you do and how you can delegate or constrain. So they just say like you're overworking, or you're you care more about the job than you care about this marriage. What's going on here? They feel they blame the job because they don't see in the way that you see it.

So Maggie, you said that so beautifully. Like you have to be able to be willing to delegate and constrain when it comes to school leadership. Because I guarantee you, school leadership is going to offer one more thing, one more thing, one more thing. There will never be an opportunity that won't present itself to you as long as you keep saying yes.

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Maggie: Yeah. I love this idea that that we should really understand that it's like a domino effect. What you're saying yes to at work means you're saying no to something at home.

Angela: Oh, that's actually really poignant. Because we have to keep that in mind. For every yes at work is no at home. Woo.

Maggie: When we register that it's like am I going to miss a dinner? Am I gonna miss a baseball game? Am I gonna miss a birthday party? What am I saying no to? Am I going to miss just being home and watching Netflix together and holding hands and being silly? Or my husband and I love to play Scrabble. So we're gonna miss the Scrabble Smack Down that makes us laugh and all this stuff, all that. The things that we're missing are the fabric of our life, right? So we want to be mindful of that.

One of my favorite quotes I ever read is from a gentleman named Samuel Johnson. He said, to be happy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition. I read that when I was 21/22, it was in a book called *Simple Abundance*, which Oprah recommended. Since Oprah recommended it, I read it.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: And it's a book that has 365 essays for each day of the year, and I read all of them.

Angela: Yes. A pink book, right?

Maggie: Thick book. Anybody who was in that era will remember this book.

Angela: Yes.

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Maggie: As Angela does too. I bought the book. It's a book that literally has thousands of words in it. I can tell you the one thing I remember from that book was this one sentence, but that one sentence changed my whole life. To be happy at home is the ultimate result of our ambition. So when you're doing stuff at work, why are you doing it?

Angela: True? Why are we here doing what we do?

Maggie: Why are we doing it? When we come back to wait, I'm doing it to be happy at home. But wait, I'm miserable at home. Then it's very easy to be like okay. If the purpose of me doing all this stuff is being happy at home. When we say happy at home, I think the person who said it meant it literally, but I take it emotionally. Happy in the home of my heart, in the home of my relationships, in the home of my own mindset, peaceful when my head hits the pillow at night. In the home of myself.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: I can go to bed knowing I did the best I could for the people that I care about the most. Right?

Angela: Yeah.

Maggie: I think that's a way to think about it. I want all of you to notice that we're starting with what you eliminate, constraints, delegation, all of those things, so you have space for your spouse or your partner or your family or the thing that matters to you the most. We have to, it's kind of like if we're gonna wash the dishes, we have to empty the dish rack first.

Angela: Yes.

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Maggie: So you can put the dishes in. We can't put anything on top of dishes.

Angela: Yeah, right.

Maggie: So I think that's so important. One thing I want to mention about delegation, because I used to work in HR. So all of these things sort of dance in my brain from both the life coaching side and the HR side. Is if you're coming into school leadership from a role where you were an individual contributor. So you're used to you doing everything, and suddenly you're coming into school leadership, and now you have a team, and you have a group of people and all the different layers that entails.

I just want to say, and I know Angela must have said it a thousand times too, but I want to echo it from the HR side because I've seen it in so many other places. Like school leadership is still leadership. So I've seen all these other places.

Angela: Right. Yes.

Maggie: Where delegation feels very uncomfortable.

Angela: Yes, extremely.

Maggie: It could feel wrong. It could feel like you shouldn't. It could also feel like oh the way you do it is the best way. Everyone listening, let's just acknowledge the way you do it is the best way. But we don't need it to be done the best way. We need it to be done that just enough way so that everybody is happy at home when their head hits the pillow.

Angela: Yes.

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Mag If we think about grades, right, it can be a B. It doesn't have to be an A plus, plus, plus.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Right. So I just want to offer that to you that if delegating is something you struggle with, and absolutely like first of all, sign up for everything Angela does because she will have to figure that out. That it's normal that it feels weird. Because anytime you come from an individual contributor role to a leadership role, like you never delegated before. Why would you know how to do that now? Like we have these expectations of ourselves. Like oh, I should just go because I got promoted.

It's a new skill. If you were learning the trapeze in the circus, you wouldn't just show up on day one and think oh, I should know exactly how to hang from the thing. You would have to learn how to do it. So delegation would be the same.

Angela: Yes. That's what it feels like school leadership. It's like you're on the trapeze and learning how to do tight rope and learning how to like tame the lions. Like you're in the three ring circus learning all of the jobs of the circus all at once. So here's what it comes down to is a lot of this comes down to your thoughts around time, and what you have time for and what you don't think you have time for.

I'm going to speculate that if you're in a situation where you feel like the job is impacting your relationship at home, that your brain is offering to you something to the effect of I have to spend my time here at work. I don't have time to spend my time on improving or I don't have time on my marriage or something to that. Something about time I think comes up a lot for people.

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It's almost like they don't feel like they have permission to say no to work because it's a leadership position, and they have a different definition of how they should be showing up. They don't have permission to like slow down and really understand what is going on in the relationship as it pertains to the job. Also, if we couldn't blame the job, what else is there? Because I do think there's a part that it's like easy to say it's the job's fault. But maybe there's a piece where outside of the job, we have some other exploring to do.

Maggie: Here's the truth. Every job takes on the form of the person who's in it.

Angela: Oh.

Maggie: So when we say it's the job, it's me.

Angela: Okay. That's the truth.

Maggie: Because anyone who wants to debate this, you I'm @VMaggieReyes on Instagram. You hit me up, and let's discuss. Because in all my years in HR, in all the different roles that I saw and all the different departments that I interacted with, when one person would leave and another person would come, the whole department or take on the personality of the person who ran it.

Angela: Wow.

Maggie: Every single time. So all of you think about the schools you've worked in, the principals you've had when you've had principals, the department heads you've had when you've had department heads. Is it or

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isn't that true that when one person left and another person came, the department took on the personality of that person?

Angela: 100%. I know this is true, at least from my experience, because I think about this with superintendents, right?

Maggie: Yeah.

Angela: Superintendents come and go. When we talk about culture, we're just talking about how people feel, right? Culture is emotion. How the school felt was based on who was leading, right? So it's such an easy way to see it. If it's hard for you to look at it from your own, like you looking at you, look at it around you.

Maggie: The people that you've worked with before. Like notice what it's been like with those people. Oh, that's right. When that person came, suddenly we did things this way. Then that person left, and now we do things this way. It all worked, right? The school kept running, right?

That's something that's really useful to notice. When you've had wildly different leaders, some have been command and control, some have been collaborative and participating with everybody getting buy in, and yet the school ran. Sometimes better than others.

Angela: Right?

Maggie: That's right. So if you're in a leadership role, the best thing that you can do is find out what matters to you, what kind of leader you want to be, what you want to bring to the table, really think about that deeply. How you integrate your personal life with your work life. Because when you do that

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as the leader in the school, you invite everyone in your culture to do that too.

Angela: Yes. This is why I tell school leaders that the very first step in the Empowered Principal™ program is aligned leadership. When I say that, it's value based leadership where you have to decide your personal and leadership values must come first before you open yourself up to asking everybody else. Yes, there is a place for consensus and a place for stakeholder input, but you have to ground yourself and tether yourself in your own values.

I want to say like for the purpose of this particular podcast, your value might be your marriage. Your value might be your personal relationships. You can have both. You can be a successful leader, and highly value your marriage, your partnership, your relationships with your own children, or your own family, or friends outside of work. That can be a leadership value that guides your school in a very positive direction and towards the vision that you're creating. Because like you said, if the job is us and we are the job, then we get to create that vision for our school that matches our vision we have at home.

Maggie: Yes, I think it's so important. I love it that you lead with value. So I teach a marriage strengthening program called the Marriage MBA. One of the very first things we do is a values exercise. I think that this is the way that I look at values. I want everyone to sort of lean into this.

Values can be really simple. So you might value collaboration. You might value freedom. You might value structure. You might value different things. Whatever it is that comes to mind that you value, it's your flashlight in the forest.



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Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Because Angela and I use all kinds of cognitive tools. We will help you with all the things. We'll talk about all the different things that we teach in our programs and all that. We'll give you all the stuff, right? But when you're in the middle of the night in a forest, and you need to get out and get a flashlight, you don't have to remember the 54 things we're going to teach you. All you have to do is say what is my value?

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: If I was leaning into that value, then what do I do? What do I say yes to? What do I say no to? How do I approach it? So I think it's so first of all so powerful to lean into that. I think that for so many people, and because I worked in HR I can say this from an HR point of view, it's more important to have a simple value, like a post it on your desk with three words that you use every day than to have pretty posters on the wall that you never pay attention to.

Angela: It's so true.

Maggie: Because I've been in a lot of companies and a lot of meetings and a lot of situations that had really pretty posters.

Angela: Yeah, I know that posters.

Maggie: Nobody was consulting the values when they made any decisions at all, or there were values of the wall that didn't match the actual values. So we would say we care about our team. But then every decision is made based on profit, not on team.

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Angela: Yes.

Maggie: We care about the environment. But every decision was made based on efficiency and speed, not on what was actually best for the event. So there's pretty posters, and there's actually being in relationship with your values, which if it's something that hasn't been encouraged in the other school situations you've been in, being in a program like Angela's program where you just lead with that. You start with that. It's on your mind all the time. Every week you're connected with that.

It's like plugging yourself into the wall. Like every week you're reminded oh, that's right. This is what matters to me. Oh, okay. Hold on. Let me rethink it, then, because I was going on the values of the previous principal who said, This is what mattered in this school.

Angela: Exactly. Yes. Yes. So I'm going to shift gears a little bit. I'm thinking about, here's where my heart is hurting. Over the summer, I've been more and more active on social media just checking in with principals. I have my own Facebook group talking about the value of fun, we did a summer of fun challenge, where I challenged the principals every week to post all the fun they're having with their families and their friends and their partners. I would send a little gift their way just to encourage the value of fun that it brings to our lives.

In that, I was also researching where are people not having fun? Where does school leadership not feel fun? What aspects of that are coming up. Again, this really pains me to hear that somebody's most beloved relationship in their life is being so impacted by their work. Like when you're in it, it's hard to decipher. You feel so conflicted and so pulled in both directions. You feel like I value my job and my relationship equally. How do I maintain both of these at the level to which I want?

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So I really want to speak to those. If you're listening, and you're already in a position where you're hurting, or you feel like your relationship is suffering in some way, shape, or form, and you believe that you're just feeling torn between the job and home life. I just want to tap Maggie's brain a little bit on that and talk about what can you do if you already feel like there's something slipping? Or you're afraid that you're not sure how to go about getting this balance back in check.

Maggie: Okay, so the first thing I would say is start leaning into the value and the treasure that is just calling do over.

Angela: Yeah, oh.

Maggie: Do over, right. Like you can be in the middle of things. You can see it's not working right, or the middle of the school year, or the middle of whatever is going on. It's like hold on. This isn't who I want to be in the world. Let me do this over. Whether it's the middle of a conversation, whether it's the middle of a decision making process, the middle of a meeting, whatever it is. Almost any relationship professional you'll ever talk to will always, at some point, talk about do overs because it's something that's so easily available to us. We forget.

Angela: I'm so sorry to interrupt you. But I just I want to point out. I want to say this again, and have you hear it from the rooftops because in education we are not taught to do over. We're taught that it's one and don. You get one chance to pass the test. One chance to get it right. I know in school leadership, I was taught fake it until you make it.

So when you just said that it literally shattered thoughts that I've had about leadership, which is we're not here to pretend we're getting it right. Even though we can feel when we're going down a path isn't going to be

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successful, that we keep going and try it until we navigate that. It's like being able to just push pause right then right there. Is that what I hear you say?

Maggie: Yes, yes. Yes.

Angela: In the moment.

Maggie: In the moment, in the very moment. Okay, that's not something we're not that we're teaching in schools at all. Not to kids, not to teachers, not to leaders. So what ends up happening is people have struggles in their relationship. They come to relationship coaches, therapists, whatever. Then we're like no, no, no do overs. First thing, step one.

Angela: That's really mind blowing for educators. I just want to put it out there.

Maggie: Yeah. So, through foundation of our values, right. So saying my value is a collaborative environment, and then I decided I want to do something in the school, and I'm just gonna do it because I want to do it. I'm ignoring the value of collaboration, right?

Angela: Okay, yeah.

Maggie: Or my value is collaboration. Then I decided to this thing in the school that's going to take me an extra 10 hours over the next month, and they don't consult with my partner about hey, I'm thinking of doing this thing at the school. It's going to mean this, this, and this. I'm going to come home late three nights a week for the next month. How would that impact the family? No, I just decided it and ignored my value of collaboration.

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So you get into that, and then your partner's like that's not gonna work. Then the moment you're in the middle of the project, you can say, "Listen, we need to rethink this because I've noticed everybody's here at eight o'clock at night. That wasn't the point."

Angela: Right. Right.

Maggie: So I've had clients in the middle of a fight, I kid you not, because we'll report back in our coaching sessions, in the middle of a fight practicing this do over thing, and they'll be like, "And then I realized that didn't want to fight this way. Then I just said hey, hold on. This isn't who I want to be in the world." Then it always disarms the other person. The other person's all riled up. Then they're like what do you mean? They're like, "No, no, actually, tell me more about what you're thinking of doing." Then the other person is so perplexed that it's like super fine to just see their face.

Angela: Yeah.

Maggie: It's also like well, actually yeah, I was thinking this, this, and this, right. Then you're just offering a whole other direction.

Angela: I cannot love this more. I just think about kids innately do this all the time.

Maggie: Yeah.

Angela: They're like no, no, no do over. Whether it's playing tag or whether even like when they're learning. Like I was a kindergarten teacher for 15 years, five year olds have no problem with do overs. They love do overs. It just made me realize maybe innately as humans were designed for do

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overs. Like if we just let ourselves have the do over without any judgment about it.

Maggie: Yeah.

Angela: It changes the course. You don't have to wait until—Here's what happens Maggie. like I'm just thinking about school leaders might be having a conversation with a teacher or parent, and they feel like it's kind of going in a direction that's confrontational or it's not getting resolved. But they keep on.

Maggie: Yeah. They keep on going.

Angela: It's like they wait until after the conversation to digest it and to like pick through it and kind of figure out what went wrong and how they should do it differently. Versus being like this just feels off for some reason. Let's do a timeout.

Maggie: Yeah.

Angela: Like redirect immediately.

Maggie: Redirect immediately. Yes. So we can call it redirect. You're fancy. You're a principal. You don't have to say do over if that's not who you are.

Angela: Oh, we want do overs.

Maggie: But you can call it course correction. You can make it fancy if you—I know there's some people listening now about the do overs and some people listening like we must have a name that reflects the gravitas of the situation.

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Angela: Education loves its labels. Yes.

Maggie: So you can call it course correction. That's quite all right. But the essence, right. A redirection, the essence of it really is you can be in the middle of a conversation. Especially if it's with a parent or your subordinates your team. Like hold on, wait. I am on your side.

Angela: We're on the same team.

Maggie: We're on the same team, which of course, in my work, I'm always about as a team how do you figure this out? As a team, what do you want? So if you're having a conversation that's going sideways and the first thing you do is you say wait, hold on. We're all on the same thing. So let's act as if we're all on the same team and start again.

Angela: Yep.

Maggie: What do you want? What do I want? Here's what's happening, right? Starting with the facts is always a good idea and with a desire. So I teach a whole communication framework called soul centered communication. It's very, very, very simple. I'm gonna tell you the like super simple, the simplest way possible. Then I have a whole podcast episode. I can send you the link so you can link to it in the show notes.

Angela: Oh perfect.

Maggie: But soul centered communication is solution focused, open hearted, uncomplicated, and loving. I'll tell you what the steps mean. Then the centered part is it's centered, means it doesn't happen instead a stress cycle. So if you're in fight, flight, freeze, or appease, if you're freaking the freak out. You need a break. If you're in a situation at a school in the middle

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of a meeting, your break could be I need to go to the restroom. I'll be right back. You just go. Take a drink of water. Shake it off.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Pretend you're Taylor Swift and shake it off. Then you come back and then you regroup. So that's the centered part in a nutshell. The sole part, solution focused. What does resolution look like here? So if you're going in circles with your spouse, and this is really I teach it for marriage. So I teach this for marriages, but you can do this with any situation. What this resolution look like here? What do you want? What do I want? Okay, we need to know what that is.

Angela: Well, for these people suffering in their marriages, like we've got to get grounded on what is it that you do want?

Maggie: Yeah. What do you want?

Angela: I love this.

Maggie: Open hearted. Open hearted means, this is really inspired by the Gottman's teaching and research. Couples who thrive and relationships who thrive are open to each other's influence. So what does that mean? It doesn't mean you're going to do everything the other person says. It means you're going to take it into consideration when you make the decision.

But some of us, listen I'm Cuban American, and I'm a Leo. Sometimes I am not open hearted. Sometimes I'm stubborn, and I want what I want the way that I want it. I know when I'm being that way, right. So soul center communication, the reason the open hearted is one of the things is like



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hold on. Are you really open to considering their point of view? Or are you not? We want to check.

If we're really not open to listening to their point of view, my guidance is to reschedule. Figure yourself out first. Don't go in circles. It's a waste of time. Nobody gets anything from you having a meeting you shouldn't have had.

Angela: Right.

Maggie: Then this one, everybody just lean in. Okay, pay attention. Uncomplicated. Everyone can't see us, but Angela literally just leaned in on the zoom. Okay. So uncomplicated means one thing at a time. One thing only, and then the next thing. If you only practice that, all of your relationships will improve dramatically. You may test it. This is what I mean by that. Maybe you're sitting with the teachers. Now you're a principal. You're having a meeting, and they want something.

Angela: Yeah.

Maggie: Then what they come to the meeting, and they say, "Well, but in 1987 this thing happened." No, no. One thing at a time. One thing only then next thing. Or the other scenario is they want this particular thing, but they also want 54 Other things, because we all want things right?

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Then the meeting is to discuss very specifically what we're gonna do about whatever, paid time off. But they also want to talk about this and this and this and the other the other. It's like one thing only. Then the next thing.

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So if you have that in your mind when you're in the conversation, you can come back to okay. I understand we also want to discuss these other 54 things. Let's have somebody start a chart. Let's have somebody write it on the board. Let's not get derailed into these other conversations. Let's make sure we leave today with a decision. Then these are the things for the next meeting or the next agenda, whatever it is. One thing to time, one thing only, and then the next thing. You will cut your conversations in half.

Angela: Yes, that is so true. Yes.

Maggie: Then the last part, the loving part. If I was in HR, I would maybe call it respectful communication or something this, but I like loving everybody. I even loved everybody when I was in HR. I used to give scratch and sniff stickers to like VPs. People were like what are you doing? It was so funny because they'd be like very serious people, and then they'd be like I want my sticker.

So the loving part is that in a conversation, think about being loving towards the other person, loving, respectful, whatever word you want to use that feels resonant to you and to yourself.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: So in many of my clients that I work with, and I think Angela's gonna be very similar, you tell me. We're very good at prioritizing other people.

Angela: Yes.

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Maggie: The children, the fate of humanity, the parents, the teachers. That's why we're in this leadership role because we really care about all these people. Were often very bad at including ourselves in the scenario.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: So if I was equally as important, if me and my family and their suffering was equally as important as whatever I'm working on for the kids or for the teachers or for the school then how would I approach this? If I was equally as loving. Now, it doesn't mean I'm more important. It doesn't mean that suddenly my priority is the biggest one. No, we're just saying equally as important. Not above, not below, equal.

When you start doing that, it's a whole different conversation. Because people will want things, and then they'll come to you. You'll say well, in order to execute that, it would take 36 hours. Because I'm the only person who can do that, I would have to work seven days a week for the next eight months. Right? Then you're like if you tell somebody that they'll be like, "Oh, we wouldn't really want you to do that. Like that would probably not be the best idea."

Angela: Yeah.

Maggie: Okay. So then you're having a new conversation of like well, how do we get it done? Can we break down different parts of it and do the most essential part? Can we make a three year plan around it? What else will also get it done? So that is soul centered communication in a nutshell. Its solution focused, open hearted, uncomplicated, and loving. Use it at home, use it at work, report back, we want to hear.

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Angela: Yes, exactly. So okay, I want to wrap this up. I want to really give people something like a homerun to walk away with. So let's say you're the school leader. Maybe your spouse has approached you saying this isn't working for me. The job is consuming you. You're listening to this podcast, and this is resonating with you. You're like this is happening to me in my life right now. How do I as, a school leader, what do I do to approach implementing this kind of practice in like the very first step practical way?

How do I approach my spouse with this like realization of like I have this big, important job, and my marriage matters. I'm hearing this podcast. Now my thought is, what can I do? What's my first step in making this happen without having to give up the job or give up the marriage?

Maggie: So I love that you said that. So the first thing I would do is we all are a little bit subject to all or nothing thinking.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Black, white, yes, no, all, nothing. So the first thing we want to do is just assume that there's someplace in the middle where we can make it work. So we start with a positive assumption that there could be a different way forward. So I'll give you the craziest example, but I want everybody to hear this. My house is currently being tented for termites. I'm staying in like a rental apartment place. My husband went to like wash his hands. The sink thing was stuck. The little thing that makes it all the water rise?

Angela: Oh, yeah.

Maggie: He said, "It's just stuck. This is how it is. It's like it doesn't move. It must be broken." I said, "No, no, no. There's a button. There's some more button we haven't pressed, but there's something here." He literally turned

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to me and said, "Because you told me that there was some other way, I then believed there was some other way." Then he found the button.

Angela: Ah.

Maggie: Right. It was really that simple. So for everyone listening to us, if you take one thing away from everything we've talked about is there is another way. It's not black, white. There's a button we haven't pressed yet. Okay. So that's the first thing.

The second thing is to use what I just talked about in soul centered communication, and have a conversation with your spouse. Okay, I'm hearing you. What does resolution look like to you? What do you want to be different? Really important to be specific. Because when I work on relationship stuff, everybody tells me I want to feel more connected, but nobody really seems to know what the heck that is.

Angela: Right.

Maggie: Like if we're more connected. Are we going on date nights? Do we have sex more often? Do we go on vacations? What's happening when we're more connected? Are we playing Scrabble?

Angela: Right.

Maggie: For everybody it's gonna be different, right?

Angela: Yeah, exactly.

Maggie: So your spouse is worried. They've come to you. You're listening to us. You're like what's the first thing I do? Hey, I want to hear what you

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want to be different. Now, you person listening to us need to be able to take a deep breath and just listen and not freak out and not get offended when your spouse says, "Well, what I'd really like is for you to be home every night for dinner. What I'd really like is this, this, this. When you're not doing that, I feel like you don't care.

When you hear the words I feel like you don't care, but you know that you care, it's very easy to get offended. So we need to help you take a deep breath and know that your spouse is just using the words available to them. So we want to know that same framework I just said. So what does resolution look like?

Okay, so if I came home for dinner. I can't do all five nights of the week, but I think I could do three? Could that be a place for us to start? What do you think? What's going on? Like being really specific about what success would look like this? All of us who are, I went to public school my whole career. It's like we know what success looks like. It's like did you pass the test? How many students got the grade? What essays? We know how to count things, right? So, so simple.

Really, it's like okay then you can look at your calendar and say oh in the last three weeks, I was home for dinner three times each week. Like then we can know whether you did it or not. Then when your spouse says you're never home, you're like but wait. We have been doing this. It has been changing. Right? Now you have facts.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: So that's what I would say is the first thing is assume there's a button you haven't pressed yet. Ask your spouse what would resolution look like for them? Ask yourself what would it look like for you if you were

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thriving at home and thriving in your job? What hours would you be working? What projects would you be working on? What would you be doing with your family? What's happening that is already working?

Angela: Yes, that's huge.

Maggie: That's huge. I know Angela focuses a lot on that in all her work. So it's like she will guide you to figure it out. Then what would you like? What's missing for you right now? So, using that framework then are you open hearted? Are you willing to listen to your spouse? Are you uncomplicated?

We're not overhauling your entire existence. Maybe we're talking about what's happening Monday through Friday. Maybe we're talking about what's happening on the weekends. Maybe we're talking about a specific what happens during baseball season or a football season when you have a million extracurricular events, and you have to announce the winners, and you have to console the losers and you have to do all these things.

So that's another thing is like okay during offseason, I might be this is how we do it then. Then during season, or whatever these different chapters of our school life have, okay, this is how we're going to do it that, and we're gonna make up for it in this way.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: Again, to bring in my husband who inspires me so much, he is audited all the time. We talk about all this stuff together. Tech stuff, psychology, and he works in IT. We talk about IT. But I'm fascinated because he has, it's not that he has it, but it's a thing people do, which is called a compensating control.

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Angela: Okay.

Maggie: So when he's audited, they're like well, for security purposes on internet security, you're supposed to have this firewall, and that thing and the other thing. He'll be like oh, we don't have this thing. But our compensating control is we do these 24 steps instead. Then that creates the same result as having these five things that you asked for. So it's a compensating control. It compensates for the thing you don't have.

So it's like okay, football season, it's gonna be crazy. I won't be home for X amount of time or whatever. I'm just making this up, obviously. But then in the season, the compensated control is going to be oh, but I'm gonna miss X number of games to do this other thing with you. At the end, we're all going to Disney together, and then we're gonna take a family whatever right? What's the compensating control?

Angela: Perfect. Yes. This has been so helpful to the listeners. Actually, I just want to say this. If you are suffering, if you are in a painful moment of your marriage where you feel like you can't see past it, or you feel like you have to choose this all or none. Like it's either the marriage or it's the job. If you can just sit in the space just with yourself, you don't have to even approach your spouse right now. But if you can sit in the space of what is possible, what do you personally want, and just playing around with the possibility that there can be an and.

Like I talk a lot about the land of and, living in the land of and as a school leader where your staff is supported, and you have time for self-care. Your husband or your spouse gets a piece of you and your school gets a piece of you and you get a piece of you, right? Believing that it there is a possibility. You are in the realm of possibility where you can have both and it can be successful on both ends. What would that look like? Just I like to



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wave the magic wand. My pen is my wand, and my journal is my Dreamland. Oh, she's got the wand.

Maggie: I have a literal wand that I like to use on my clients. You can buy a wand on Amazon. Beware, if you go to buy a wand on Amazon and you Google magic wand, you have to put the other terms or you're gonna get a different thing. But I have an actual wand.

Angela: That is awesome. School leaders, you need a wand. Okay. We talk about this in our 200k group. That's how Maggie and I met. You want a wand.

Maggie: It's so much fun to think of if I was waving a magic wand, what would I want here? It opens your brain to think something else, to think something new.

Angela: Yes. It's just fun in a creative way. What I like to do is I like to do that first because it allows me to play in a safe space, to imagine possibility without getting into a conversation with my spouse or with my colleagues, but just it gives me like a kind of a container to really imagine bigger and better. Before I approach any conversation out externally, I have that conversation with myself internally. The wand just let you get very creative and fun and playful with it.

Maggie: I'm gonna just say this because you're listening to this podcast because you made a better life. You want to be a better leader. Is when Angela is coaching you or teaching you her workshops or the different things that she leads, you have a compassionate listener who's helped so many other people through the same things that you're going through. It's kind of like we know the way out. We know the way forward. We can walk you through it. There's something about having a compassionate listener

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who has no vested interest whether you do this or whether you do that or whichever one calls to you. They're just listening in service of you.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: So if you've been thinking. You've been listening to this podcast every week, and you're like Angela knows what's up, right? You haven't booked your call, or you haven't reached out to her for the way that she invites you to reach out, I'm challenging you right now reach out to her. Because this conversation was awesome. It was great. But imagine having her on your side every week. It's a whole other level. So that's all I want to say about that.

Angela: Oh, Maggie, you're too kind. I want to end with this. I am doing a series of interviews throughout the fall for my school leaders and trying to grab every resource possible for any situation or problem that school leaders are facing. What are all of my resources, and Maggie is one of these resources.

So if this podcast really triggers you or resonates with you in terms of, you know what? I am A game on my leadership, but my marriage has been suffering, or I want to improve my marriage, or my marriage is good, and I want to take it to great. I highly, highly recommend that you follow everything Maggie Reyes. It is brilliant. She has a podcast. She has a book. That is I think it's—Well, I have two copies of it. One for myself.

Maggie: Oh, that's so fun.

Angela: Yeah, I bought two. One for my husband, one for me so we can personally write in our own space on it. We're gonna put the link to that book in the show notes along with all things Maggie Reyes because if you

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are in a space where you're a school leader, and you want to have an amazing leadership experience and amazing marriage, please contact Maggie. She is your go to person for this.

I can't refer her high enough. I recommend her 1,000%. She has helped me personally on the journey of self-love, self-compassion, and just self-acceptance into like stepping into my—I talk about like growing your self-concept, evolving your self-concept as a leader. I've had to grow and evolve my self-concept as a coach and as a business owner and as the CEO of this company.

Maggie and I through our friendships and our conversations and through our masterminds, we talk about how we evolve ourselves when we're in a new space like this. I have really been doing the work in the last six months, which is why I'm able to share all of this with you. Because I don't believe that I can evolve my business without evolving myself, and you can't evolve your school without evolving you.

So whether that is your marriage or that your leadership skills, you have so many resources available to you through the life coaching industry. We are all here cheering you on, rooting for you, celebrating your marriage. We know that it's possible for you to have the most loving marriage possible along with a successful school. So Maggie, is there any last words of wisdom before we say goodbye?

Maggie: Everyone remember do overs.

Angela: Do over.

Maggie: For the win.

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Angela: I'm taking that and putting it in my pocket right now. Because I have to say like for school leaders, I think that is going to be game changing right there. So that's the last word of the day is the do over. You can have multiple do overs. Correct?

Maggie: 100%. Yeah.

Angela: Every day.

Maggie: Yeah, every day. There's no wrong time to course correct. There is never a bad time. Oh, this is one thing that I say. Whether it's three minutes, three years, doesn't matter. You suddenly remember that three years ago, you were a bitch to your cousin. Sorry, if I swore.

Angela: That's okay. We allow it.

Maggie: Okay. So you suddenly remember, you're like you know what? That wasn't my best day. Can you imagine if somebody right now sent you an email or give you a call and said you know, remember that summer camp we did together, and I really wasn't my best then? This other stuff was going on. I just want to say I'm sorry. You would freak the freak out.

Angela: Yes.

Maggie: So let's be the change we want to see in the world, right?

Angela: Yeah.

Maggie: When we notice, there's no bad time. Three months, three years, doesn't matter.

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Angela: Exactly. Oh, that's perfect. So as you listen to this podcast, think of one do over that you can take action on. I think that's your little homework assignment for the week. What is one do over that you can take action on that is going to course correct for this day forward? I think that's super fun.

Maggie: Love it.

Angela: Love it. All right, Maggie, thank you so much.

Maggie: Thank you.

Angela: Love you. I will see you in Orlando.

Maggie: Yes. Bye everyone.

Angela: All right, bye.

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