

Ep #247: Focusing on Health for School Leaders with Paige Bowman



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Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 247.

Welcome to *The Empowered Principal™ Podcast*, a not so typical educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy by refining your most powerful tool, your mind. Here's your host certified life coach Angela Kelly Robeck.

Angela: Hello my empower leaders and Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast. For those of you who've been listening throughout the month of September, you know I have had multiple guests on the podcast this month. I have reached out to my Life Coach School community to offer you the expertise you need to handle anything that comes your way as a school leader, including all of those personal things.

So we've talked about money, we've talked about marriage, and today we're going to talk with my friend and colleague, Paige Bowman. She is a life coach for weight loss. I'm going to ask Paige to tell more about what she does and how she helps people.

We're going to dive in because I want you to understand the connection between your body and your thoughts around the job and how those two interrelate, and I'm going to share my story and my journey as a school leader throughout the conversation with Paige today. But we're really here to talk about how to create awareness and connection with our body as we are in that leadership role. So Paige, welcome to the podcast.

Paige: Hi, thank you for having me.

Angela: I'm so glad you're here. This is going to be such an important conversation for people because a lot of school leaders what they don't

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realize until they're in the job is how stressed they are, how much busier they feel. They feel lots of overwhelm, lots of confusion, just all the feels right. What happens, at least for me, what happens for me is I gained weight. So we're just here to talk about it. So can you just introduce yourself and tell the listeners a little bit more about who you are, what you do, how you got into coaching for weight loss?

Paige: Yes, thank you for having me. I am excited to talk more about the stress and the overwhelm and then also how that has to relate to the body and weight gain and all that. But yeah, let me introduce myself. So my name is Paige Bowman. I am a master certified life and weight loss coach certified by the Life Coach School, who three years ago helped me learn how to lose weight by learning what to do with my thoughts and my feelings. I know you talk a lot about that on your podcast. But I come from the world of counseling. So.

Angela: Oh, okay.

Paige: Yeah, I didn't know if you knew that.

Angela: No, I didn't know that. That's pretty cool.

Paige: So I think I was crowned Miss Psychology in my junior year of high school. Ever since then I was like okay, I want to do something with the mind. For the longest time, I thought that would be counseling. I had my master's degree in professional counseling. But towards the end of that I realized I actually wanted to help people go beyond learning what their diagnosis is and getting up to a functional level. I know your episode on why mental health matters, you talked about how therapy and coaching are different.

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When I learned about coaching, I realized you know what? Counseling helped me get to this point to learn about what coaching is, and actually, that's how I want to help people. I want to help people who are functioning, but they're going to things outside of them to feel better. The Life Coach School and coaches helped me figure out what to do instead.

So I thought it was so basic, but I was like this is what I want to do. I want to help people who go to food or alcohol or TV or social media to deal with stress and overwhelm and help them learn what to do instead because my coach helped me do that. So I lost 25 pounds while working, while building my business, while doing all the stressful and overwhelming things.

Now I help my fellow coaches lose weight and learn how to stop emotional eating and overeating while they build their business. Because as you said, when we're doing these things like even being a school leader or being an entrepreneur and a CEO and a coach, there's so much stress that can come with that position. So my main job is to help them figure out what to do instead of going to food specifically. So that's what I do.

Angela: Yes. This is why I asked Paige to be on the podcast. Because let me just share with you a little bit about my story. So if you've listened to the podcast, you've probably heard some of it before, but I haven't spoken to like the mind body connection and the like career body connection.

So for me, when I first became a school leader like first of all, I was a single mom, and I was just trying to survive. Like my son had just entered into middle school. So he was going through a major transition academically and just socially. Middle schools awkward anyway. Then I was going through, I was actually a brand new principal at a brand new school. The school was under construction. It wasn't fully functional. We had all kinds of construction issues.

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So I was living on that campus, and I was living and breathing that job. Just putting pieces together to ensure like Alex got to school and got home on time and had sufficient supervision and got to all of his after school events and whatnot. So I was really juggling. I wasn't even thinking about my body. I've been a person who was pretty fit. I was a runner. I've never had a lot of like over eating struggles, I would say. So it never really entered my mind.

But what I noticed was that because I was focusing on work, and I didn't feel like I had time to prioritize going to the gym or getting even a walk or running or anything. So my physical activity dropped significantly. But I also was because I didn't have time was the thought, I was also starting to eat on the go, which convenience food. Fast food. Like whatever was the quickest thing to fuel my body and get on with working and with parenting.

So over the course of time, I was a school leader for seven years, I gained I don't know the exact number. I'm going to say it was around 25 pounds. It happened kind of slowly over time. There were moments where I was aware of it, but I just didn't want to deal with it.

So Paige, I mean I guess just to start the conversation, a lot of school leaders I know, they are aware that they're maybe eating differently, or they're exercising differently because of the constraint of time, I would say. We'll start with that thought around time. And priority. Like being able to prioritize it because you feel like you don't have time.

Can you just speak to a school leader who's out there, who's feeling super stressed right now? It's the start of the school year, and they've got the year ahead of them. But their thought is like I don't have time to even think about healthy eating, healthy lifestyle, exercise, diet. What would you say

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to those people who are struggling with how to manage the time aspect of healthy foods and exercise?

Paige: Yeah, well, I know you've talked about like coaching involves a lot of questions. I know you've said that one of your favorite ones that you use with your clients is what's the problem? So I would take that here because if you think about kind of what you were saying is like time is a constraint. Because I think it takes a lot of time, I don't prioritize it. So I would say take the question of like well, what's the actual problem here? Is it that I don't have time? Or is it that I'm thinking it'll take a lot of time. It'll take a lot of energy. So therefore I don't give it the time. I don't make it a priority, even if I want to.

This is something that I talk a lot about with my clients and in my marketing because I want people to know this message that working on your health, your body, your weight, your body image, those things actually don't have to take a lot of time. It's more of starting.

I mean even if you start small, maybe I'll do it if I'm going to get an action. Talk about the action for a second. Like going on walks, five minutes a day or five minutes once a week and starting to implement that. Okay, on Sundays, I have five minutes. I can put my shoes on, and I can get outside for five minutes. I know that I did something for my body. That doesn't take a lot of time.

But if you're thinking that I don't have time and working on myself is going to take a lot of time, you're definitely not going to do anything about it. So what I would say for that is to consider that the problem is actually your belief that it'll take a lot of time, which is so good. I always like to say, and I say this on my podcast too with my clients, it's so good to know. It's so

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good to know that the problem is I'm thinking this will take a lot of time so that I don't give a time. Then we can solve for that.

Angela: Yeah, I love this. Okay, I have to tell you guys, Paige and I were in the same mastermind. She did a peer coaching session with me, and I don't even remember what I was coaching on, but you said like no ambiguity here. Let's be very specific about the math of it. That's always stuck with me because what you're saying is the brain wants to just like dump it into one big bucket. It's all swirling around. Like I don't have this. It's too much time. I can't do this. I can't do that. It's like all one thing.

Just like if you actually just pare down and get very specific and like remove the ambiguity, the real problem behind the problem is it's not that you're busy being a school leader. It's that you think that let's say adding a walk per day is going to result in less productivity at work, or that it's going to take away from something else. Like your sleep or time with your own children or something.

It's like you feel like there's a cost associated to it's like time is like money, right? Where you spend your time and you invest in in certain ways, your belief is that it's going to cost you more in time than it really does. So I love that you said like you got to get really specific about what aspect of time is really the problem here?

Paige: Oh, yeah. I would say like the other thing is I also like to say like of course. Like of course you're telling yourself you don't have time because making a change in your diet, the way you eat, and moving your body, etc. is going to be something new. That's gonna be uncomfortable. The brain doesn't like new and discomfort.

Angela: Right.

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Paige: Right? Going on a walk, maybe it doesn't seem like a big deal. But if you haven't been walking or maybe adding a salad in a week, but you haven't been having a lot of vegetables or having salads, and that feels uncomfortable and that feels new. The brain will do anything it can to keep you from doing that. So it'll tell you this story about time.

Angela: Yes. Right, to distract you.

Paige: Yes. So it's like of course. So when you hear yourself say like I don't have time, you can pause and check yourself and be like hang on, is it true that I don't have time, right? Just like you're saying. Like well, what would I actually want to start doing? Or what change would I want to make? How long does it actually take, right?

So putting on my shoes, changing, like we'll just get real clear. Changing, putting on my shoes and then going outside, that might take five minutes to change and put on my shoes, and tell the kids and the partner hey, I'll be right back. Then maybe the walk is another five or 10 minutes. So it takes 15 minutes, and then you come back you go take off your shoes again and change again. So all right, it's gonna take 20 minutes. Do I have 20 minutes? Am I willing to feel uncomfortable to start adding this into my schedule?

Then the other thing kind of to what you said was that thinking that it's costing you to do this thing, and I would say again like of course you're thinking that. Like being productive and being on top of things is so important as a school leader. So I would say is well, what would be the benefits of making these changes? Right?

Like when you're in what third or fourth grade and you're learning multiplication, like you're kind of trying to teach the kids why it matters. Not

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just like this is what we do, but here's how you could use this. Right? Although they have to do it anyway. But you want to kind of sell them on here's why you're learning this. You do that for yourself too. What are the benefits of moving my body, of eating foods that feel fueling? How could this actually help me? It might help me feel better. It might improve my sleep. I might start feeling better about myself. Then what would be the impact of that on my job as a family member, etc.?

Angela: Yes, yes. I really love debunking the myth of time because I feel like that's always the first objection. At least for a school leader, that tends to be the first objection that comes up because the job could fill your life right? It's just like the job will take as much time as you give it. So like the first order of business here is taking agency over our time. When we get into the leadership role, making intentional decisions about putting things that you want to accomplish, like maintaining your weight. Not even maybe weight loss. Maybe you're just like I just don't want to gain weight as a school leader.

That requires me to spend like to schedule time for a walk or for meal planning or prepping my lunch, like whatever like activity regarding your intake and your expenditure of energy. Whatever it is you want to do, right? But understanding the value of that use of that time that goes far beyond just I want to feel good, or I want to lose weight, or I want to maintain my weight. It's like but why?

I think we have to uncover the why. Why do you want that? Why is that important? I just call it the five why's. I keep going down. Like well, why do you want to maintain your weight? What are the reasons for that? Maybe keep up your energy, to be able to keep up with your kids, to not have to buy new clothing, right? To feel like you're looking professional and prepared on the job. Whatever it is, you make that list. Then why are each

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of those things important? I feel like the roots start to deepen in terms of your commitment to that why.

Paige: Oh, yeah. The thing is because you were talking about they don't, like you as a school leader might not prioritize it because you don't have time. But if you're sold, if you sell yourself on why this matters then even that argument about time.

Like if you really sell yourself and you kind of go down that list and then ask why again, you'll get to the point where you're like this is the most important thing, and I will give it the time it needs. Whether that's 20 minutes a day or an hour on the weekends or depending on what it is you're talking about, I will give it the time because I have prioritized it. So we're kind of attacking it at both ends. We're talking about time and why you would make it a priority.

Angela: A little hack that I like to help school leaders with is if the why, if the purpose of the why and the benefits don't sell you, sometimes you have to sell yourself on the cost. Like what's the cost of not doing this? I like to look at both ends. Like yes, the benefits like everybody knows the benefits, but like what's the cost of not? What will happen if you continue down this path of choosing to not prioritize your health and your sleep and your rest and getting some movement and exercise in? What really ends up happening?

I just had a consult the other day where she was saying like the health is in jeopardy. Like it's reached the point of being in jeopardy. Heart conditions, overweight conditions. The body does respond to the stress and the overwhelm and the overworking and the overexertion over the course of time.

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So in the beginning of your career, you might not experience the negative impact. But when it's cumulative, the cost of not prioritizing yourself and making this decision, it can really have lifelong lasting impact. So it might be easier to sell yourself on the cost than the benefit, but I like to double down with both. Like tell me all the reasons why, and tell me what I'm giving up in the cost of not prioritizing this part of my life.

Paige: Well, and to talk about time some more.

Angela: Yes.

Paige: I think to your point like selling yourself on the cost of not and kind of what we're talking about with why it would be a priority. What are the benefits? Another piece of this time aspect is we're saying to think beyond the now. Right?

Angela: Yes.

Paige: Not to just be so focused on what needs to get done now. My body is okay right now. Like we don't need to make changes now. But something I talked to my clients about is, and I make a big focus, is thinking about your future self, and the impact of what you're doing or what you're not doing. Purposely thinking about the future, instead of being so focused on the now.

Angela: Right. Yeah, and actually our coach just did a podcast on that where it was talking about yes, there's this component of delayed gratification where like let's get real here. At a school there are always treats in the staff room. For some reason, people drop off doughnuts, or they bring over their leftover from some event or there's chocolate. Like there is always a bowl of candies or chocolate or something. Like teachers

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in and principals have no loss of calories available to them. Like there's always something around. Bagels, donuts, like all the things.

When you're just walking through and you're are subconsciously like going through your day and you see the donut box, you might think to yourself like oh, I'm hungry now. Oh, that'll tide me over until after lunch or something. Like you'll have that kind of like a subconscious thought, I would call it.

We don't really stop to think about because we're so busy and we're telling ourselves we're too busy. That really why we're grabbing that donut isn't maybe necessarily because we're hungry, but it's because it's this instant treat or like it's five seconds of like pleasure that we're giving ourselves because the rest of the day it feels so hard, and it feels so hectic. We're not building in other types of pleasure that don't include food.

So I know for me like there was a point in my career where the only thing I was looking forward to in the day was lunch. Or on the days where we would go out for lunch, I loved that because it was like the social—What I really was craving was like the break and social connection. But it was always around food. Right? So then I was dining out more and probably eating more because I wasn't paying attention because I was socializing.

So what do you speak to that, Paige, where how do you teach your clients to be create awareness of grabbing the snack for the immediate gratification for that future self of you? Like what is the strategy they can use to create that awareness in the first place? So when they walk by the donut, they can pause enough to remind themselves what's in the best interest of my future version of me?

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Paige: Well, I think the first thing is to build awareness of why you're going after the doughnut, right? Like kind of, again, like what's the problem here? What is this solving? So I just actually coached a client today. We were talking about she's been eating these lots of sugary foods. What we're talking about is going to the root. What need is this fulfilling? So is it I need a hit of dopamine. I need that desire. I need that shot to feel good, or I'm feeling bored. I don't like how it feels to feel bored. So I'm wanting something to make that bored feeling go away or restless.

So I would say the first piece of awareness is, as you grab the donut, and I call this like the first phase of awareness.

Angela: Yes.

Paige: Grab the donut, but as you grab it ask yourself why what is this fulfilling for me? What am I missing that this is solving for me? Then you're understanding a little bit more about what's the problem. I have this motto that I like to. I say we desire life more than food. It's this idea of we're always going to have desire. That's just how we work as humans is we're going to desire things. Then we want to feel fulfilled and experience those dopamine hits.

Whether it's instant gratification or long term wellbeing, we want to go ahead and decide, right? If you're thinking about your future self and yourself beyond the now decide, well what is it that you're going to do to fill that desire? If you want to be someone that doesn't grab the donut, and instead does something else, well, hat is that? So if you're wanting that, if you know that when you go to grab the donut, it's because that you're bored. Well, then, what do you want to do when you're bored?

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If you were to sit and just think about it, what kind of person do you want to be when they feel bored? Do you want to grab a notebook and start making some notes about this idea you had? Or do you want to go talk to a friend? Or do you want to read a book? Like what do you want to do to fulfill that that need for stimulation? Then you can start implementing that. Oh, I want donut. Oh, yeah, it's because I'm bored. I'm going to do this instead. So I would say the first piece is the awareness of what's happening. Then the awareness of what you would want to do instead.

Angela: Right. Oh, this is so good. Because you can walk to the staff lounge, and you might have a different reason on different days that you grab the donut. Like one day might be you're actually starving, and you have had no fuel. Maybe you're just like no, I'm actually hungry. This is all that's available to me right now. I'm going to be okay with eating it until I can get to my salad later this afternoon.

Like there are moments where I was like I'm willing to eat the thing because it's what's here. It's now. It's convenient. It's fast. I'm on the go. I actually am hungry. I know like I don't want to eat doughnuts on the regular, but I'm going to choose to eat this donut now. Like there's that. Because that's a lot of school leaders, right? But if that becomes the habit, then you want to ask yourself every single time you pick up the donut why? Because it might be a different reason. It might be stress.

I would say like with school leaders, there were times where I could walk by the donut. If I had had breakfast or I at least had a coffee. I'm not a big breakfast person, but if I at least had coffee that morning. If I had something in my stomach and I didn't feel hungry, I was so much less likely to pick something up out of the staff lounge than when I was starving. So there was that piece.

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Then there were times where I would blow through, and it would just I had no thoughts about doughnuts until I saw one. Then the desire would kick in. That is where it was like oh, it's because I'm stressed. Or it's because I'm going to a meeting that's going to be a challenge, right? Or oh, these are gonna be gone in five minutes. I gotta have it before somebody else gets it. Even though I had no desire for it until they actually saw it and then I wanted it.

It's almost like the visual of it created the desire when my body had no intention of eating donut that day. So I find that fascinating how what you're saying is like the awareness piece is critical because there might be different answers on different days.

Paige: Yeah. So as you like build this awareness, like really do this. Like pay attention to what's going on and what your needs are. Then to something I've heard you say in the past like now account for it. Like this is going to be something that you're going to want to solve, whatever those different reasons are. So start accounting for those. Like nine o'clock in the morning, sometimes I feel stressed about whatever's going on. Like that just happens to be— I mean you know yourself, right?

Angela: Yes.

Paige: Whether you're a new school leader or you've been doing this a while, you know when you feel stressed, and you can account for that. So, this is where I say doesn't take time as much as just some purposeful thought. Like intentionally thinking about well, these are the things, these are my stressors, and this is what I tend to want to do to handle the stress. So here's what I'm going to do to take care of myself instead. Right?

Angela: Like an alternative, almost, right.

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Paige: Right. Because you're gonna have stress, right? We're not saying that we're going to wave a magic wand and make all your stress go away.

Angela: If I had that, I would be making millions.

Paige: But like no, you're gonna have stress so account for it instead of just keep dealing with it in the way you have been and being unintentional about it.

Angela: Yes. Okay. So for my listeners who follow me on the regular, this is what I call pitfall planning where it's like if you anticipate the pitfall ahead of time. So there is a certain amount of obstacles that you can anticipate ahead of time. If you know like you tend to be hungry in the morning or you tend to respond to stress by like going into the staff lounge and scrounging around seeing what there is available. If you know that that's your trigger and your response to it, you can create an alternative solution to that ahead of time so that when you're like.

And this gets into like really understanding what stress feels like in your body and understanding it. I'm spending a lot of time teaching clients to like really get intimate with their emotions page, which Paige taught me about. Like really getting familiar with how do you respond to stress in your body? Like what's that vibration feel like for you? It's different for everybody.

What is that signaling to you? It's kind of telling you like do you get need to get up and take a walk? Do you need to take a break from the work you're doing? Do you need to call a colleague or a friend? Do you need to play Candy Crush five minutes on your phone? Like is there something that you can do that's unrelated to food that could give you the same relief that you're looking for?

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Paige: Right. To be clear, I'm not saying that we just replace it with another thing that is maybe not going to benefit you in the long run, which is why you and I are both life coaches. We teach mindset and emotion work that is the overall answer to the stress of the overwhelm, right? But when you're talking about starting to make these small changes and just shifting your thoughts on what's possible for me right now, then being aware of what's creating the stress, why you're solving it with food, what else is possible, that's a powerful shift you can make now.

Angela: Absolutely. Like one, it comes to awareness. I feel like awareness is a huge first step and then developing the skill set of how to create awareness. Then I think there's kind of the step two, and this is also where I was.

I found myself like okay, I'm at the point where I can't deny or ignore that I have gained weight. Like I'm aware I'm gaining weight. Like changing the size of clothes and just looking in the mirror. Like seeing the data reflect back to me like okay, I am gaining weight in this position. So there's that undeniable awareness piece, and then there's that moment of like am I going to address this? Or am I going to avoid and resist?

So now it's almost like there's awareness around the eating part. Then there's like your ability to be open and stay aware in the result it's created. Like being willing to feel the feelings that come with already having gained the weight. Like because I feel like there was like the unawareness of the action of maybe buffering with food to compensate for emotions I didn't want to feel, but then there was like the feelings about the weight gain.

Then it was almost like I'm stressed at work. Now I'm stressed about my weight. I have maybe shame or guilt or you know like another layer of feelings about it. Then you almost want to like push that away even more.

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You kind of get into this cycle of like I feel bad about feeling bad about feeling bad.

So do you notice that coming up with your clients, and what can we offer to the school leaders who maybe they've gained a little bit of weight, or even if they're super fit and they're not able to work out. No matter where you are on the spectrum of weight or health, but if you've noticed a shift that you're not happy with. I'll say it that way. Then there's feelings about that. What do you recommend Paige?

Paige: Oh, yeah, I mean every time a client comes to me on a consult, this is exactly where they are. They're not happy with where they are. Even though they're on the consult and they're ready to make a change, they don't like where they are. This is something that I just actually released an episode when we're recording this in August on my podcast, *Weight Loss for Life Coaches*, and it's called how to know when to get started on your weight loss journey is what I'm talking about.

One thing that I talked about is if you've decided to—In the podcast, I talked about how to know when to get started, what filters to use, et cetera. Then something I like to say is if you've decided that now is not the time to get started, and you put that goal on the shelf, kind of like you put a book on the shelf, and you're not ready to read it.

What I like to offer people is if you're not getting started yet, or you've decided it's not the right time, or you're in that awareness. Like you're talking about where like hang on, I might need to lose some weight. What I like to say is we want to meet yourself where you are. There's so much power in having acceptance that this is where I'm at right now, whether I am getting started or I'm not. This is me. This is what my body's like. This is my current part of my journey. It's possible to be okay with that.

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Like it's possible to—I teach this concept called the love paradox. Because we always think that we have to hate and be discontent and feel shame about where we are to motivate us to get into action.

Angela: Right.

Paige: Right? I'm like here's the paradox. You could love where you are, and I work with my clients on this. So I'm not saying it's easy, but it's possible. You could love where you are. You could accept where you are. You could still want to make a change. Like it's possible to have those two things in your mind, right?

Angela: Yes.

Paige: So what I teach is this idea of coming to acceptance. This is me. This is where I'm at right now. Maybe I gained weight as a like a mechanism to deal with my stress. It's an option to not move forward with judgment and shame about yourself and where you are right now.

Angela: Yes. Oh, yes. That is so important to distinguish that out. So for my listeners, I call the Model the STEAR cycle. It's just the same, but it's easier for an acronym. But it's like when I talk about when you're engaging in conversation with another person, there's your STEAR cycle. There's what's happening in your mind, and then there's separately what's happening in their mind. And when you engage with them, there is like a Venn diagram like the middle where you have thoughts and feelings about their thoughts and feelings.

This is kind of the same concept where you have thoughts and feelings about your job and how you feel about the work you're doing. Then over here, you have thoughts and feelings about your body and your weight or

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the way you look or your image. Then you have the combination of your thoughts and feelings about your job and the stress and then the eating and reaction to that. Now you have another model going on about your thoughts and opinions about how you handled, how you approached that stress, basically.

What Paige, I think I hear you saying, is like it's actually an option to either be judgmental or self-berating or like feel lots of shame around our decision at that moment versus saying to ourselves like in the past before I had these tools, I made the best decision I could at the time to deal with my stress. Now I'm deciding to learn another way. I don't need to feel bad about doing the best job I could back then.

Paige: Oh, yeah. Even like this is what I tell my clients. Like you're not going to start losing weight just like that just because you hire a weight loss coach or just because you have the idea. So this is helpful even in the now right. If you're like I've gained some weight, or my health is not where I want it to be, in the moment this will help you as you go along the way, right?

I've heard someone say this where you want to feel good at the end. Like you think you're gonna love when the scale says that number or you've lost weight, or your health is in better shape. But if you want to love yourself while you're there, at the end, you got to insert love along the way.

So if you're a school leader who's got some high cholesterol, and that's something that you're struggling with. I know my mom is like working through that journey herself right now. It's gonna take some time to make the shifts necessary to lower that, whether it's by food or medication or whatever.

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You could spend that time berating yourself and judging yourself and just making it mean all these negative things about yourself. Or you could spend that time having these kinds of thoughts by yourself like okay, at least I figured it out. I'm on this journey to fix it. Like you said, Angela, I was doing the best I could, that's by what I knew at the time. Now I'm making these changes. Like it's 100% up to you how you want to talk about yourself or talk to yourself on the journey, but it's important to know that it's optional to be kind to yourself and have compassion.

Angela: Okay, I just love this because what just triggered for me was lots of people want to be a certain weight like a number on the scale or maybe it's a size of clothing because of the way they think they will feel when they get there. What's interesting about that is if you don't address that first, when you get there then you'll want something else. Like you will always be chasing the emotion, how you think you'll feel when you get there. But if you can't figure out what would it look like to feel that now or how can I generate that feeling now? And to practice those thoughts.

So for example like I know for me like I had the thought that when I lost the weight that that meant—Well, I guess I made it mean something about me like that I was disciplined, that I was in control. I was just making it mean something about discipline, right? Like I used to be a runner, and I was a big gym person. Like I loved working out.

Then when I got into school leadership, I didn't prioritize the amount of time. So I made it mean like h, you're not disciplined. Yeah, just like kind of mean stuff. But so fast forwarding to like okay, if I was 20 pounds lighter, what would I be thinking about myself? How would I be feeling? What actions would I be taking? How will I be different as a result of losing that 20 pounds? Then how can I apply that to where I am right now? Is that what kind of I hear you saying?

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Paige: Oh, yeah because here's the thing, and someone listening to this, you might already know exactly what I'm going to say. But if you have already lost the weight, and then you gained it back, you probably know that you still had all the same mind drama and shame and doubt. It all is still there whether you're at your weight loss goal or not. Like it's not the number on the scale. It's not the size of your body that makes you feel shame or takes the shame away. That's not it at all.

I'm laughing because I just had a client tell me who wants to lose about 30 or 40 pounds. We just started working together. She told me that she has actually been at that weight before. She wants to get to that weight. We're doing this work together. She told me that she read her diary from her birthday from a few years ago when she was at her goal weight. So she was about 30/40 pounds smaller. She was miserable. Like the entire journal entry, she was feeling terrible. She was just miserable, and just whether it was in her life and just the way she even thought about herself.

Now she is, she's 30 or 40 pounds heavier, of course, now working on losing that weight. But she's doing the mindset work, right, working through her thoughts about herself, her thoughts about stress, about her job, about her body, and learning how to drop those old beliefs and how to believe new things, right. What to do with those emotions when they come up and mastering just feeling her feelings.

She told me. She was like, "I feel 10 times better than I ever felt when I was at that number on the scale." I'm like I know. I could have told you that. But for you to understand that yourself is so good. So it's like just don't get caught up in the trap that oh, you'll feel better when you get there. Because not only is that maybe not true and then we're putting really the responsibility on the scale to feel better, but then you're pushing away feeling good now.

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Angela: Yes.

Paige: Like you'll not feel good now. That's the biggest bummer to me.

Angela: Yes. The disappointment that will come when you work so hard to physically lose weight, but you haven't shed the weight of the mindset, right? Because really what loses the weight, I mean you can do the physical actions that are required to lose weight, eat less, move more. But if you bring along with you the thoughts, this happens in school leadership all the time too.

Like people who are dying to become a school leader. They're aspiring, they're interviewing, and they're getting no's. They're getting rejected, and they just want it so bad. Then they get in it, but then their self-concept isn't like I'm a leader. I trust myself. I can make great decisions. They haven't practiced the self-concept. So they get in the position, and then they're a mess because they haven't done the thought work part along with the actual activity of interviewing, preparing, doing all of the actions required.

So if there's any nugget you could take away from Paige today it's that there are physical tasks and activities and actions you can take to lose weight. However, that doesn't ensure you feeling better. Because your feelings are not created by how you weigh, like what you weigh or what you look like. They're created by the thought you have about yourself. That journey. It's like the reason you feel better 20 pounds later is because you have different thoughts about yourself than you do 20 pounds heavier. So if you can start applying those thoughts to the 20 pound heavier self on that journey.

I think you're right, I love the land of and here where it's like I can think some of those thoughts about me now. Maybe on a belief scale, I'm at a six

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out of 10, and as I'm going through the journey, my belief is growing. But you don't have to perfectly believe all the thoughts now in order to lose the weight. You can be at a 50/50 here.

But you can give yourself permission to this is where I am today, and I want to lose weight. Like the desire to lose weights not a problem, and the weight you're at's not a problem. It's how you're thinking and feeling about yourself here and now and in the future and along that journey.

Paige: Oh yeah, yep. That's exactly. I named it. I call it the love paradox. That's exactly it. Kind of just to go back to like tie it to what we talked about in the beginning. What you're talking about, in the coaching world we call thought work, right?

Angela: Yes.

Paige: I don't know if that's how you say it on the podcast, but it's working through your thoughts. So what are my current thoughts? What are some my current beliefs? What are my thought patterns? It's like the awareness right? Do I want to change any of these? What do I want them to be in the future? What I want to start thinking, etc.? That doesn't take a lot of time, right? Going back to the time conversation.

Like on your drive instead of listening to the radio or a podcast or music, go Imagine yourself who's at her goal weight or his goal weight or their goal weight or is in that better health condition, or is taking those daily walks. Imagine yourself, your future self, and think about like what are they like? What kind of things do they think? How they deal with stress? What do they do or not do? What's a little bit different between them and me?

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That just takes like a couple minutes to even think through. You could do that on your drive and start even opening up the possibility of thinking about things differently and what's possible for you and getting some awareness to what of what your current thought patterns are. That doesn't take a lot of time. That just takes intentionality, being purposeful.

Angela: Right? Yes. I love that. Because one of the things I used to do with myself is if I were at my goal weight and I just weren't even thinking about it. If it just wasn't even on my radar anymore. I wasn't thinking about weight loss, and I wasn't so consumed about whether I got to the gym that day or not, or if I ate something good or bad, or my pant size. If I wasn't thinking about anything related to my body physically or my weight or my image, what would I be thinking about? I just think that's such a fun thought.

I also think that can be kind of a, it's almost like an obstacle. It's almost a little bit scary. It's like oh, I have been thinking about I consume so much of my energy and time and focus on like my weight gain, my weight loss, my size, talking about it to other people.

Like what would I actually do with that time and that energy? You have to plan that because otherwise you just keep filling it back up with being obsessed about the weight and the food and I just found that that was a big game changer for me. It was like what would I be doing with my time if I weren't thinking about this and talking about this and putting so much energy and focus and attention on it?

Paige: Oh, I've seen that with many people like who am I without this struggle? I had a client who told me that one of the reasons why she feels like she's always making this a problem, just from becoming more aware of her own brain and her own thoughts like we're talking about here is if she had more free time and more space in her brain, she was afraid of getting

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more existential and like really questioning things in life. That was like a fear of hers.

So it was so interesting that we uncovered that, and of course, worked through that. That's not even something she worries about. But it's like who am I without this being a struggle. You know what's underneath that? I know sometimes with my clients they struggle with weight loss sometimes covers up boredom in their lives. Like this is something I don't have a problem with or negative thoughts about themselves. Like we'll blame the reason why I don't like myself on my weight, but if I don't have a weight problem, then facing that relationship with themselves head on can be very uncomfortable.

Angela: Mm.

Paige: So this is, of course, why I do weight loss coaching because I know for some, there are things that can go so much deeper than changing your exercise routine or your food patterns. But this is why I say like meet yourself where you are. Because for some it can be a deeper thing than just not grabbing the doughnuts anymore.

Angela: Yeah, oh my gosh. That is so true. Because I would venture to say for most people who are thinking about their weight, if they couldn't think about the weight or the weight no longer became the struggle, then what? That is where you almost feel exposed to yourself. That's where the deeper work comes in where this isn't really about the weight loss at all. It's about our vulnerability with ourselves and what we believe about ourselves at a deeper level, of what we're capable of doing, our self-concept.

I can see that so clearly now where like this is just the surface conversation. Then once this starts to unveil itself, what's really going on

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below the surface? Which I think of it as like whether you drink wine or you eat food, you're masking the deeper thing, right? Then the weight gain just gets to be that what keeps you protected. Just like kind of swimming around and like oh, I need to lose weight. Having that conversation versus like but why did you gain it in the first place? The feelings that come with that can be very painful.

Paige: Oh yeah. I have had many a coaching conversation with my clients where when they eat mainly vegetables like whole foods and proteins and solid whole grains and fruits, etc. We cut out sugar and flour, which isn't a requirement. I don't make all my clients to do this, but sometimes we'll do it. What's left is they realize that most of their comfort came from food. Kind of like what you're talking about like earlier with going to food to feel better, or using it as a thing to get your dopamine hit if you didn't have those social connections, or etc.

So I've had many coaching conversations with a client who realized that my life is kind of boring without food. That's the reason why. Not just the stress we're talking about like as school leaders, but like do I like my life? For some, the answer is no. So I go to food so that I can feel joy and happiness. So it's like for some, it's stress. For some, it's to feel pleasure.

Angela: Lack of pleasure. Yeah, it's like a lack of other pleasure. Which is why school leaders, I did the summer fun challenge in the Facebook group, and why I insist in your three month plan that you have to put fun on your calendar every single week so that when you're having a hard day, you can say to yourself I know today is really hard. But on Friday, I'm meeting up with my friends. Or on Wednesday afternoon, I'm meeting up with my friends.

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There's things in your day that you can look forward to outside of work and school leadership that can kind of, you might have to delay that gratification until a day or two later or even that evening. But knowing that I've got something fun planned. I'm going to walk with my best friend, or I'm going to meet up for coffee or something. When you put those things on your calendar for fun, you can almost like delay that need for dopamine hit because you know you have your back, and you have prepared to give yourself some sense of relief and pleasure outside of like scrambling for it in the moment. Just needing that instantaneous relief. I feel like.

That's one of the things in school leadership. Like it's one thing to have fun during the summer, but in the school year it's essential to yourself as a leader. But as it relates to weight, it really does matter to decide how I want to experience pleasure and fun outside of food.

Because food's just so accessible and easy, but it's instantaneous and then it's gone. That pleasure, it's there, and then it's done. Like how long does it really take to eat a doughnut? Maybe a minute or two? Or you maybe you bite tinies to let it last longer. I don't know. But it only is going to last so long. Then you're back left with the feeling, and what are other ways that you can experience relief and pleasure outside of food?

Paige: Yeah, and I'll just add this piece to what you're talking about. Because we're talking about being purposeful about adding fun and those things that you'll find pleasure in outside of food into your life. But there's something else that I like to teach my clients and talk about, and that's purposely loving and finding joy in the things you are doing right now. Right? It might feel like in the moment, Monday through Friday, you're kind of in the rat race, making sure that things are taken care of and fighting fires and just supporting your staff and the students.

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But you could also add in this piece of your day where you're finding joy on purpose in this thing that you decided to do, right? This is your career. What do you love about that? It's not just like a gratitude practice, but like a joy practice. What do I love about being a school leader today? What do I love about it this time of year? Kind of, as you were saying earlier, diving into your why. What about diving into your joy?

Angela: Oh, that's good.

Paige: Right?

Angela: Yes.

Paige: I just made that up.

Angela: I love it. You heard it here first people.

Paige: Dive into your joy.

Angela: Yes.

Paige: It's like add those things outside, and can you add more love and joy by thinking about how much you love the thing you're doing right now? Again, something that doesn't take a whole lot of time.

Angela: No, it really comes back to intention because I like to remind my leaders like you made a decision to take this role. It's a massive shift in self-concept going from teacher to school leader. Yeah, there is a gap there. We do have to like slowly fill that gap and self-concept. But you did make a decision, and part of that requires you to own that decision, and to remind yourself why you made that decision in the first place.

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I know for me like there were moments where I'm like woo, like this decision does not feel good right now. But I'm going to still choose it because you can leave. You can go back to teaching or find something else to do. Reminding myself of like going into the kindergarten classroom when I needed a break after a rough day. Like that can be an instant hit of joy, or going out to the playground.

Right now we're recording this in August, where it's the beginning of the year for a lot of schools. The joy that my principals are feeling right now that first day back, especially if kids are coming back to campus for the first time after the pandemic. That like reminder of this is why I'm doing the job. It's for these guys and seeing your teachers and having a successful staff meeting and really looking for the joy in the job. Because it isn't all or none.

I know there are bad days there. Maybe there are rough years even. But at the end of it, each day has something if you look for it. It's about choosing to look for it, and to remind yourself that even in the midst of really hard times, there is a reason and there is joy should you choose to accept it.

Paige: Oh, yeah.

Angela: Yeah. Okay, Paige, this has been so, so good. I can't believe we've been, well, we've been talking for two hours, but we've been recording for the last hour. But do have any other last words of wisdom, last little bits of nuggets? Like if there is a school leader out there who's listening, it's like oh my gosh. I just realized like I have been over eating or over drinking or I have gained weight. I don't want that to be my experience this school year. Like what can they hold on to to get started?

Paige: I don't usually say this word, but something like there's hope. But you know what? As I say that, I actually want to say it's possible for you to

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do something different. But at the same time, right, it comes back to meeting yourself where you're at.

So if you're just now gaining some awareness just by hearing this conversation know that it's possible for you to make changes in the future. Also, you can have your back right now. Like okay, I do have some weight I want to lose, or this is a health condition I want to work on. Maybe my body isn't exactly where I want it to be. This feels super uncomfortable hearing all this stuff, but just that awareness, right? It's what I said earlier. It's phase one is awareness. Just that awareness is everything.

What I like to say is as soon as you become aware, you've already changed the trajectory of your life. Like it's a done deal. So now, you can just take steps, right? Continue being intentional, continue building your awareness, and know that it's possible for you to be different and for you to change. But love yourself where you are too, right. It goes back to the love paradox.

Angela: Yeah, yes, I agree. Like I just started thinking of a million more things we could talk about, but I won't go there because we've got to go. So school leaders out there, I guess here's what I really want to say is I know you are told make sure you put your oxygen mask on before others and self-care and self-love. Sometimes when you're in the thick of it, it can feel like we're blowing smoke or like trying to blow rainbows and daisies up in your business.

But if you think about yourself and your thoughts about yourself and your relationship with yourself, your body. Though the number on the scale, or the size that you were, that factual result, is really just a reflection of your journey with this relationship with yourself. Because your body and you are one, and you are in relationship. Your mind and your thoughts are reflected

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through the way your body feels, the way your body looks. I think what this really comes down to is the willingness to get intimate with yourself, to get familiar with yourself, to become a friend to yourself.

Your body will respond to that. We talk about in education like there's lagging indicators. There's like instant indicators and lagging indicators. The number on the scale might be a lagging indicator of the personal work required to build that relationship with yourself.

I will also say this. Your capacity to build a relationship with yourself is the capacity to which you can build relationships with others, which you are in the business of people and building relationships with parents, students, teachers. So this work while it might sound indirect or it might sound like not a priority, it actually is one of the most powerful things you can do. To enhance your leadership skills is to build that relationship with yourself and your body, and to be in tune with what it needs and what it wants.

I don't mean like what kind of food it wants. I mean like what it really desires. Like the deeper desire whether that's connection or love or fun or pleasure or sleep, really being able to tune in and ask yourself, what do I most need right now? What does love look like here in this solution to my body's reaction of gaining weight?

Paige: Yeah.

Angela: So Paige, first of all, thank you for the time. I know we've spent a great deal of time together today, which has been my ultimate pleasure. Can you please tell the listeners like if they want to follow you, if they want to like get on your email list. Tell them all the ways in which they can contact you and follow you and get more information about how they can start this journey for themselves and maybe even reach out to you.

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Paige: Of course. If you're listening, you're a podcast listener. So I'll just direct you there first. My podcast is called *Weight Loss for Life Coaches*. I would for sure, if you love this conversation, I would go listen to that. It's got over 30 episodes on there. So much of it is just going deeper into the kinds of things that we talked about today. So *Weight Loss for Life Coaches*, go check that out.

If you're on Instagram, you can follow me @lifecoachpaigeb. I love Instagram so much. I have also a bunch of content that speaks to what a lot of what we talked about today. Then I also have a website paigebowman.com/services if you want to get on my mailing list where I send out a weekly email.

Angela: You're Facebook too, right, because I feel like I follow you on Facebook too. Like I know Instagram and Facebook kind of like you can post on one and they all show up on all the things, but if you're on Instagram, follow her there. If you're on Facebook, I follow her there because a lot--

Paige: Life Coach Paige B. I think like [facebook.com/lifecoachpaigeb](https://www.facebook.com/lifecoachpaigeb).

Angela: We'll put all of her links. Like I'll have Paige send me all of the links and put them in the show notes so you can click directly from the show notes. I know for a lot of you like because I'm on Facebook and I have the Facebook group, you can follow her there. You're gonna be able to find her no problem.

Oh, this is what I wanted to say. Even though her niche is weight loss for life coaches, you can just put in weight loss for school leaders because the content is the same. So the podcast doesn't have to say empowered

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principal or school leader it can say anything. Just fill in the blank because the content is rich and valuable.

I follow Paige personally because it keeps me in tune with my body. It keeps me reminding me to go back to that relationship with myself. This is the work that Paige has really, and she doesn't even know this, I'm gonna say it. She has really helped me like really be in love with who I am right now on the journey, and to have fun. Just to like wake up and be like okay with who I am today, even though I maybe want to lose weight, or I want to gain muscle strength.

That's kind of where the journey I'm on now is like working out and strength and just staying strong as I'm getting into my 50s and maintaining all of my strength and my energy and my ability just to keep up with my 23 year old. But it's about like getting out there and having fun with this body today. Whether it's at the weight I want or not, it's about I'm just gonna go and have fun today with my life right now regardless of my size or regardless of my grandma flab or whatever it is, right? Like I want to go out there and have some fun with my life. I don't want to delay it one more day.

That's something Paige has really taught me through her messaging. So please follow her. It will be worth your time. I just I love you so much. I appreciate your time. I can't wait to see you in Orlando.

Paige: I know. Thank you so much for having me. I love that because that's exactly the message that I want to spread across the world. So I love that, and I can't wait to see you either.

Angela: I know. I know. Well, thank you again. Listeners, I hope you have enjoyed this week's episode. Next week we've got Rebecca Olson coming on. She's going to talk about how to be a parent and a school leader, and I

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can't wait for you guys to hear that episode. So take care guys. We'll tune in next week. Talk to you then. Take care. Bye.

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