

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami



Full Episode Transcript

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Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 249.

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, empowered principals. Happy Tuesday and welcome to today's podcast. I have a really special episode for you today. I have one of my favorite clients here. I say that about all of my clients, of course. But Jami is one of the most amazing principals I have really ever worked with. She's so smart. She's so on top of her game. She came into the Empowered Principal™ coaching program that way.

We're going to talk about when you believe like I already have systems in place, I already have like an introduction to like how I want to approach, I know myself, I know my school, and I just want to move it forward or I feel a little bit stuck. This is what Jami is going to offer for you today.

So I'm going to turn it over to her and let her introduce herself and tell you a little bit about her. Then we're going to get into how she has moved her coaching mindset, her leadership mindset from good to great. I think she's on the path from great to exceptional in her now.. Is this your third year Jami?

Jami: Going into year three.

Angela: Okay, awesome. So Jami, introduce yourself. Tell the listeners who you are, what you lead, and how you got into school leadership.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Jami: Awesome. Thank you, Angela. So my name is Jami Austin, and I am the principal of a K-8 public charter school in the Silver State, the state of Nevada. We opened the school during the 2020 school year, which was the pandemic school year. Prior to that, I had served as an assistant principal, an interim principal, and as a teacher for about 15 years in both secondary and elementary. So excited to share with your listeners today.

Angela: Great. Okay, so your school is a little bit different than a traditional public school. Can you tell the background of your school? Because this school is fairly new, and that is an additional challenge that you face in becoming a principal and starting this school really from the ground up. So can you tell them a little bit more about that?

Jami: Yeah, absolutely. So we are a charter school. So what that means is that we're a school of choice. Students apply to our school through a lottery process during an open application period. When we opened the school, we had 690 students that we were attempting to recruit and were doing a great job recruiting right before the pandemic hit and everything came to a screeching halt.

So we had to look at our marketing strategies and our connection strategies with families and shift our thinking a lot in terms of how we were going to get the word out about our school, and think about what the educational needs and mindsets that people would have for their students going into a pandemic school year. Our students are in grades kindergarten through eighth. So we house essentially an elementary school and a middle school on the same campus.

Angela: Yeah, it is a big job. So for anybody out there who's listening who thinks that like this job is too hard. It's just not manageable. There's too much to do and not enough time. I want you to know that Jami is really the example of what actually is possible because she's opening a school that's

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

not traditional school. It's a charter school. And in addition to that, it's K-8, so it she's covering a lot more bases. So she's covering not just elementary needs, but also middle school needs, and the teaching staff required for that. So how many teaching staff do you have again? It's a lot.

Jami: This year we're going on 48 teachers and 70 overall staff members.

Angela: Right, and you are the primary person who isn't responsible for overseeing all of these people, right?

Jami: Absolutely. We have our own governing board. So we do have a school board that is a public school board, and they govern just our school. So they hire me and entrust me to all of the responsibilities for managing the school. So I essentially function somewhat as a superintendent and also a principal of my campus.

Angela: Yeah. So it's pretty amazing how she's been able to do all of these. We're going to talk about how she breaks down and does time management, and she's able to perform her tasks. And some of the coaching we did throughout the year on not going insanely crazy with her schedule, and how to work less and how to maintain some sense of balance. Because in addition to running this entire school, she also is a mother and a wife. She has three children. Correct?

Jami: I have five children.

Angela: You have five children?

Jami: I have five children.

Angela: How did I miss that? I was thinking it was three. Like okay, so if anybody thinks that they don't have time, I want you to call Jami because

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Jami's parenting five children. She has a lovely husband at home who's highly supportive of her. But she's running an entire school and having to wear the hats of superintendent, in addition to charter school and brand new school opening and principal, hiring, all of the things. She's doing it all.

So we're going to share all of her secrets, all of the details, and her hacks and strategies for not just time management. But I think what Jami is really, really good at is mental and emotional management and being able to hold space for herself and her school while she's trying to figure out a solution and get her school moving in the direction she wants it to go, even when that is taking some time.

So let's just start with I know everyone's going to be dying to know like how are you possibly doing this all and sitting here right now with a beautiful smile on your face? Jami always shows up energetic, positive, happy, ready to go, ready for coaching, ready for the day ahead of her, and has a very charismatic energy about her. Jami, what's the mindset required for that?

Jami: Well, first of all, thank you for those flattering compliments. That's very kind. I think a lot of what it stems from for me is that I absolutely love what I do. I love the work that I do. I love the people that I work with. My children also attend my school. I love the sense of community that embodies and encompasses the work that I do.

So for me, it's not just about a job that I have that I go to and go home from at the end of the day. I live in the community where my school is located. I am very invested in my school and my community and bring a lot of that together in the decision making and the trajectory for our school.

Angela: Yeah, that is so important. Because a lot of people who reach out to me, they either are like that aspiring or first year principal, or they're

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

somebody who is like, I want to love my job. I want to want to be in this job. But the job has kind of consumed their desire, motivation, excitement, enthusiasm in their vision, right?

They feel trapped in kind of the bureaucracy or the overwhelm, and they want to be in the job. They worked so hard to get into the position. Then they find themselves like not loving it. How do you tap into your love of this job, even though it can be overwhelming or can be consuming or can be exhausting? Or failure, quite honestly. Like there's things that we try to put out there that don't work out. What keeps you going?

Jami: Yeah, for me, I take a lot of time to step back and reflect and take in some breaths of gratitude. So in those moments that it feels like a lot and the capacity doesn't feel like it can match the demand of the work, I try to take a step back and refocus and recenter myself. And at times incorporate my leadership team into that process, thinking about what it is that is the core of our mission here and what my vision is as the school leader and try to impart that on my staff or parents, students that I interact with.

I'm a huge proponent of understanding why with what we're doing. So oftentimes I'll stay focused on why and will go back to why are we doing this? What is the purpose behind the decision making here? If I can't explain why we're doing something, I can easily talk myself out of it or the team can be talked out of it. So trying to limit what we're doing because everything that we're doing has intentionality and is aligned with a function and a purpose for the goal of our school and for students essentially.

Angela: Yeah, that is really important. Shifting gears a little bit, I want to talk about how there were challenges that you have been facing over the course of the year in terms of staffing. Not just staffing, but getting the right people on the right spot on the bus and building that vision together so that

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

the culture thought was we're on the same team. We want the same things. We're going all in the same direction.

Can you speak a little bit to that and some of the the insights you've learned along the way as it relates to culture building and getting people on one bus, first of all? Then like adjusting those seats to make sure everybody's thriving where they are assigned.

Jami: Absolutely. So like most schools across our country, we did experience some challenges this year with staff members leaving mid-year and just shifting either their careers completely or shifting their grade level focus or school focus, and then having to deal with what that entails on campus and communicating with families what that looks like when you transition teachers.

Ultimately, making sure that the conversations because it did take having a lot of really hard conversations with our staff, having hard conversations with you, Angela, week after week and digging into wanting people to be where they're going to thrive, and giving people permission, giving my staff permission to be in a place of frustration, to be in a place where we're unsettled, and we know things aren't perfect right now. But finding commonality in the midst of it and staying focused on the goal and the purpose for the students.

Then working on finding what drives each individual that has chosen to work at our school. Essentially each family who's chosen to bring their child to our school. That has entailed, you talked about keeping space. We did a lot of work with that this year, specifically with emotions and trying to manage people's emotions. That played a huge piece in my capacity to be able to do that.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Because so often we get frustrated, we take it personally and we get frustrated when people make decisions to leave and when people make decisions to go a different path when you think you're on a path with them and then they want to go a different direction. But ultimately, what we've been able to do this year is just hold, like you talked about, hold space to say it's okay that this isn't for you. Or it might just not be the right time for you right now.

Then have conversations with people that are here, and their vision and purpose aligns and their choices to stay in is to work and to continue on with the mission and vision of the school. How can we do this better? What is it that that might be lacking? What can we do? What can we shift to make sure that our teachers are thriving, to make sure that our students are thriving, and really just take a step back.

At one point this year, we had some great conversations where I really felt like just to give ourselves permission as school leaders to know that it's okay if it's not for someone right now. It's okay if it's that doesn't work for this teacher right now. Or it's okay if you have to shift direction. That has been really impactful for me and has done a lot to help frame the mindset, as you talked about, for how to persevere when it feels like it's impossible.

So that has been a great focus this year. I think ultimately has lent itself to really enriching the teachers that have been with our school since we opened and are committed and are here. It's done a lot to just align everyone's thinking and align the purpose and recenter.

Angela: Yes, I love what you just said so much because it really highlights two things. Number one, it highlights holding space. There's different kinds of holding space. I think we first learn what it means to hold space for somebody else.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

So somebody else is having an emotional response to a situation, and we grow our capacity to allow that person to experience an emotional reaction to maybe something we've said or done or some feedback we've provided or a reassignment or a release, something relating to staffing, for example.

Being able to allow that person to have that experience without trying to come in and clean it up or like make them feel better and placate them or change it, but just to be able to stand true to the decision that we've made as a school leader and allow that person to have that experience without us coming in and trying to change that experience for them or to rush them through it or anything like that. Which then develops our patience with people and our ability to feel compassion for somebody without cleaning up their mess, their emotional mess, I mean.

But also I think, then there's that layer of how do we hold space for ourselves? I think one of the things I work on with all of my school leaders, and in particular, Jami is she's such a go getter. She's such a visionary. She's such a, I think most of you are actually. All my clients are doers. Like, we're action takers. So to be a principal who's very vision focused, detail oriented, and action taking, it can feel frustrating when other people aren't kind of doing business the same way we do business.

Then what we have to do is create holding space for ourselves for that patience and that knowing we have this vision, and we know what we're doing, and creating a space where our vision is happening, but it might not be happening as fast as we want it to happen. That that's okay, too. Right?

Jami: Right.

Angela: That's what I heard you saying is just you have expanded your capacity to hold space for other people and yourself. I feel like that is such a gift of a skill set we can give ourselves a school leaders because

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

otherwise, you're hitting the wall of frustration all around. Like in every angle you go, there is like a wall of frustration when somebody's not showing up, or you feel like they should be going faster, or the school should be moving faster, or your vision should be like rolling out more smoothly, or whatever the expectation is.

So I feel like that is something you've done such a good job on because it feels like you're being held back. Right? Can you describe how that felt to you to transition from that? Like, I picture you at the start line, like revving, and how you were able to still keep going forward, but also growing that ability to like, we're gonna get to the finish line. It's okay.

Jami: There's one particular coaching conversation I can remember from the fall. We were talking about when people are negative or when emotions and words don't come out in a way that seems positive. What you said was a phrase something like what if it's okay that they feel that way? What if it's okay?

My mindset was so focused on wanting to make sure that everyone was engaged and happy and that things were positive. Just hearing that and processing that thought of what if it's okay. I took a different lens to conversations, and I started taking a different lens to those tough meetings and that work.

Not to say that I didn't address concerns where they needed to be addressed because I think that's always important, and it's a priority for us as school leaders. But we all know how much everybody has gone through this year. Every single person on our staff and in our school has a lot on their plate, whether it's social/emotional, or it's tangible, or its home life.

There are so many layers to our life these days that once that shift for me was what if it's okay that they're that way. It allowed me to get curious

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

about what those reasonings might be and shift the conversation from trying to take action and trying to fix things to just trying to listen more and hear from people and figure out what is the driving force behind the thoughts? We did a lot of talking about thoughts and feelings and how that materializes into ultimately, our words and our actions.

So, that process, I think, has created a great shift for me as a school leader who typically wants to make decisions and fix things and solve problems and put out fires to being okay to be in a space with someone when they're not okay, and giving them permission to just say yeah, this is tough right now. This is not ideal.

Let's just sit here for a minute with this and see if we can open the doors to new thoughts and ideas and new feelings that maybe are going to shift our approach and ultimately or hopefully our thinking and thoughts and responses. So that's, I think, been a huge shift for me this year that has led to great outcomes and relationships with my staff and with my school community overall.

Angela: That's so great. I was just going to ask a follow up question, but you answered it. I was gonna say like what's the outcome or the benefit of that shift? Because one thing we want to do as school leaders is we want the, going back to what you said about why. We want to understand—As we're learning and shifting our mindset, we want to understand what's the value being created when we do this? Whether it's through an action we take or a mindset shift we have, we want to understand. It helps us to go there faster when we understand why, right?

So when we understand like oh, people's emotions are what drive every single decision they make and action they take, and those decisions and actions may create results, whether intended or unintended. But we want to

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

understand like what's the deeper value? Digging into why is that valuable and why is that valuable? What's the impact in going down?

That's something that I've seen you do this year. It's like oh, like I've had this shift, but I now see why this shift matters and the value of that, and then the long term value of that, not just for you as the leader, but for the teacher you're mentoring or leading depending on what hat you've got on. But I've seen like the depth of your leadership skills grow so quickly because you are such a why person. I think that's one of the reasons why you've like been so successful.

The other thing that you mentioned earlier I wanted to highlight for people listening is there was something that you mentioned about let's just sit with what is right now. So we're accepting what is. Like it is tough. We're not denying that it's tough. It's been tough for a couple of years now.

But we're also not going to dwell in it to the point that we just swim into a big pool, right? We're not going to melt into this big pool of there's nothing we can do. We're still going to focus on what is working, what can we do, what do we have control over? And keeping that vision as like the bullseye of what we're aiming for, but it's through the lens of what can we do versus this is so hard? These are the things we can't do.

Jami: Right.

Angela: Yeah.

Jami: Yeah.

Angela: I saw how you were taking the coaching and like deeply reflecting on it, but then bringing it right back to vision and how the mindset shift connected to the vision. Because I think there was a conversation you and I

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

had about emotion and the power of emotion. You were like I just like I don't get it because I don't go—I don't let myself kind of dwell into like really heavy negative emotion.

There was a clicking point where it's like oh, there's a purpose to emotion for everybody, for every human on the planet. When we understand the why, right, the purpose of that emotion, then it became very easy to understand it and to be able to hold space for it really is what I think I heard you say.

Jami: Absolutely. That has caused me to shift not just the work with my staff, but also ultimately, that's reflected in our students too. So it's kind of been a two tiered shift is modeling for the teachers. There's that piece of emotional regulation of maintaining when we're frustrated, and we're not content with the situation.

We've spoke a lot about feelings, when that energy is running through our body and coursing. I actually have an app on my watch now that will tell me to breathe if it can sense that I'm getting frustrated. So it's just that little quick reminder of like okay, take a breath. Just let it and sitting with that.

But then seeing that really, our students have the same need for that explicit thought and teaching and instruction in terms of regulating emotions, holding space for emotions, sitting in a place where it's okay if someone doesn't agree with you.

I think we can all have practice with that sitting in a place where we don't agree with someone, but we can be okay to be in the same physical space and make decisions together and compromise on things. And really show that emotional maturity and work on that as adults so that we are ultimately modeling that for our students and giving them that great example of what it

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

looks like when adults are regulating their thoughts and feelings and using that to shift our relationships with each other.

Angela: Yeah, that is so, so good. Can you share a little bit about your experience in work life balance?

Jami: Yeah.

Angela: It's been a process, and we're going to talk about that. Like we're just gonna talk about the reality of it. Like the reality of the job, especially when you love what you do, it's very easy to default to working.

Jami: Right. It does. Especially when the tasks feel never ending. I know we've talked a lot about that just the shift throughout the school year and then going into summer and what it feels like when you're in that state of not having the same task list or growing task lists during the school year. But definitely for me as taking care of five kids who are in various activities throughout the week and then running a school and managing staff and trying to keep everything in the air and not miss a beat.

A lot of what has worked for me is being very structured with scheduling and utilizing the tools that are available to help. So calendaring, using great apps that help with scheduling and communication so that we're having those connection points more meaningfully. So when I get to have face to face time, I've already spent time behind the scenes navigating all of the pieces that don't need to be done in person. Then the time face to face is more valuable and more meaningful and impactful.

Then ultimately, there's no lie there. I do pull a lot of hours. Like you said, I like to work, and I do like to show up at school. I ultimately end up staying into the evening. But what shifted for me was just that switch of when I go home, I leave work here. So the thoughts and feelings of there's always

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

more work to be done. We've talked a lot about that. There's always more work to be done, and it's so true.

But I have been working on and continue to work on this capacity, that the level of functioning actually increases exponentially when we're in a state of feeling rested and feeling like that we have that energy level whether it's exercise or sleep or nutrition. That feeling more of a higher functioning capacity.

That has been a great reminder for me this year, as well as it's a work in progress, right? Because there's always that pressure of trying to get more and more done. But I've also involved my leadership team in that. I think it's really important as school leaders that when we've embraced something, and we're really understanding and buying into the importance of work life balance that we're modeling that, but we're also actively talking about it and dialoguing with our teams about it and then vocalizing that expectation too.

I'll tell my staff, especially my office staff or administrative stuff, I want you to leave here too, and turn your brain off and take a break and refresh and rest and come back ready to work tomorrow. So that that's not something that is natural, especially the last two years opening in the pandemic, and all of the added tasks that needed to happen because of that.

But I think it gets easier as time goes on, and it gets it's getting easier. I hope that that continues to open up. Then staff, us holding each other accountable as school leaders with our with our leadership teams, and holding each other accountable to that and being very forgiving of people when we work too hard sometimes.

Angela: Yeah, I love that you said this because I mean, this is my fifth year of coaching school leaders. What I've noticed is that when people get into the position, it's almost like they have to dance a little bit over the line. Like

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

they have to overwork, or they have to under work. They have to play with that line because it's different for everybody. There's no like absolute line, but for whatever works, whatever balance means for that individual.

But it's almost like you have to go over the line to know oh, that's too much, or oh, this is too little to know what your line is. So I think a lot of self-compassion in the process, especially in the beginning, the first couple of years where you're overworking to just to kind of keep up, and then maybe you get sick, or you work yourself to a point where you have to under work just to get back up to the maintenance level of keeping up and playing with that and giving yourself permission and grace to figure out what that line is for you. That's that right amount of working and home life and just self-care.

It's different for everybody, but I've seen you play with that a little bit over the course of time. I can sense just energetically like sometimes in the beginning you would come onto the call, and it was just like this ah. Like almost couldn't take a breath, like there was just such movement. What I've sensed just like energetically is like I'm here for this call. I'm here on this day at this call at this time, and these are the issues I'm looking at. This is the aspect of my vision I'm working on today, this week, this month.

There has just been such a sense of like calm and certainty and assuredness in yourself that whatever I get done today was meant to get done and tomorrow's a new day. I think maybe your husband had a little bit to do with that too.

Jami: That's fair.

Angela: Okay the story is so good. Like of my favorite stories Jami told me. That on Valentine's Day, she kind of just forgot. She was working like another day, and her husband showed up to work with like a bottle of wine and I don't know snacks or something.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Jami: Flowers.

Angela: Flowers, and was like hello, I'm your husband, my name is. I'd like to have a date with you. It was so touching his love and his support of her. Just like kind of giving her that fun nudge of like it's okay to like come home and be a wife. He had he did it in such a fun way. I thought it was so sweet.

Jami: Yeah, he is very supportive. I think those little moments are important too just to know that yeah, there's that that support at home.

Angela: Yeah, it was really, really sweet. But all of us have been there where we're like where does the time go. When you do love what you do, it is easy for that to happen, which is why I almost bring it to Jami's attention a little bit more than maybe, some of my other clients are very aware that they're overworking. To Jami, it feels like flow. So I just want to make sure she's checking in with like her other parts of her life, her body and her family and friends to make sure like, am I balanced here? This feels balanced to me.

Jami: Yeah, I think there was a point this year where I realized that, and that was towards the end of the spring semester, but where I realized that, again, as the school leader in our schools, we model for other people our expectations with what we do more than what we say. So if I'm telling my teachers and my staff I want you to go home. You go enjoy. Leave at the end of your contract and go, but then I'm choosing to stay in work. They're inadvertently seeing that as okay, but you are doing this.

That was a really important reflection for me to say, you know what? If I want them to do it. So it's for my staff too. I want them to be able to feel like you take a break, check out take, take some time, just enjoy your family, enjoy life outside of school. I have to do that too. That is one of the big

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

reasons why it's something I continue to work on because it's really important to model that for our teams.

Angela: Yes, because what we do gives permission to our staff, right? Like, if you tell them go home, go home, but you're working all the time, they're gonna be like but does she really mean that? Do I really have permission to do that?

The other thing it does, and for any school leader who loves to overwork, but if you were to tune into your body, your body would be like yeah, maybe we need some time and attention and some rest. If you're that person who just loves what you do and you tend to overwork, I want you to think about it. If you can't think about the value of rest and fun and pleasure and like taking the break. If you can't find that value for yourself, it's easier sometimes to see the need for your teachers.

Like when you see teachers burned out and crabby and overworked and over scheduled and over exerting themselves, it helps you see the value in it for them, which then you can reflect back to yourself. So sometimes you have to kind of go around the block to figure out like what's the value in it for them and students, right? Like nobody wants a crabby, overworked, tired teacher in their classroom every day. As a student, you just don't want that. You don't want it as a parent of the student.

When you see the value in that you can kind of backwards play that to this also applies to me and to my family, my own children, the people in my life and my staff. My staff doesn't want me overworked and exhausted and just pushing 100% of the time. So you can backwards navigate that in your mind to sell yourself on the value of rest and taking breaks.

I really do think like your brain when it gets so overloaded, it just it can't come up with creative solutions. It just spins on the same old solutions over

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

and over and over versus really taking the break and you come back and then you see things in a different way. So I love that you did that.

I have a couple of questions to ask you as we close out. Number one, what are you most proud of in terms of you have accomplished so much in such a short amount of time. Like I work as your coach to make sure you're aware of like how much accomplishment you've achieved because you're so accomplished it's easy to overlook it and just keep going for the next accomplishment, that next hit of like what am I going to accomplish next?

What are you personally most proud of yourself for having a having accomplished? Kind of the part B of this question is what are you most proud of in terms of growth, your personal growth and development as a school leader?

Jami: So I am most proud of my staff, honestly. That the staff that started and open the school with me was mostly interviewed over Zoom and came into this not really knowing what it was going to look like, what even the physical building was going to look like, our school was under construction, what COVID was going to look like, virtual learning. We have gone through every twist and turn imaginable, navigating all of the different scenarios and requirements and responding to the students and all of those things.

So I am so proud of my staff, the teachers, and my support staff here because without them, we would not be where we are right now. So for that I'm extremely, extremely grateful and thankful. The second part of that, you'll have to say that, again.

Angela: Oh just like what are you most proud of in terms of your personal growth and development as a school leader? Like, it might be something that was really hard for you, but where do you feel like you've made the most personal progress in your leadership journey?

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Jami: I remember our coaching calls when we first started, and we did a lot of work talking about emotions. For me, personally and professionally, the whole concept of emotions was lost. I just really had to dig deep to understand. When we got into kind of the science of emotion, and I could connect that to like the physical response in the body and the feelings and like the actual, and I could break it down to a science of like it's an actual physiological response to a situation. When I actually had to get that molecular with it to understand.

When I did that and sort of crossed that threshold or had that understanding of emotion, it has been a game changer for me. I know this is something as a school leaders, we tend to be very analytical and objective data driven. Sometimes it's easy to overlook the importance of emotions. I had done a lot of study and a lot of work with soft skills and social emotional learning and those things and felt like I was pretty well versed in a lot of that capacity.

But what I had not yet fully comprehended was just that emotion exists. That is the underlying root of everything, of every conversation that we have, of the decisions that we make, of how we respond to situations. It was such a blank slate for me once I got that that it's been a really fascinating process, not just with my staff, but with my children and my husband. To give myself permission to unpack emotion and explore emotion and ask questions and be curious and take a completely different approach to relationship building. That has been, by far, the most impactful change for me.

Angela: It makes me emotional hearing you say that because I know the work was foreign to you. It felt very, like it almost felt like what are you talking about? Like we were speaking different languages. Fortunately my capacity to hold space for people is really, really big now, and I just knew that gently over time we would find like—it's just like working with teachers.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Sometimes you got to really poke at all the different angles before you understand that human and the way that they think and the way that they function and why they do what they do to be able to lead them and mentor them and coach them and guide them into the next best version of themselves as a teacher.

I just appreciate your willingness to like keep going there until we figured it out. Because I knew that you already had so much of the skill sets required that this one little nugget was going to be like explosive for you, and I just like I see your potential and it blows my mind and I guess this is what I kind of want to end the podcast with is what are your like tangible next steps for next year right?

What's your three month plan as we talk about, your leadership plan, but really I want—Can you just share like your deepest, biggest dreams and goals for your potential as a leader in terms of the legacy that you want to leave behind when all of this is over?

Jami: Definitely, it revolves around the culture of my school. I want the reputation and the thoughts that our students have long after they've graduated from this place to be that they felt cared about, that they were loved, that they were attended to, that they knew their value and their purpose, and that they could understand how to persevere through hard things, and how to set goals for themselves, and how to work towards a better tomorrow and a better future for themselves and for others.

That that would resonate not just with our students, but also with my staff. That that would be very present in our community that that is just how this school is thought of, and what people think of when they think of the students that are here and the staff that are here and the school leader. So I think that's probably my primary thing is just the culture.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

Angela: Yeah, yeah, I agree with you. I think there's no better gift to give students than the ability to expand their self-concept of what is possible. I think that's where like I'm gonna put Jami on the spot here a little bit. Like one of the things we talked about impossibility for our students and our staff.

It's like when I work with a teacher, like how good can they get? How big can they be? How good can life get for them like in terms of professional and personal life? How big of an impact or splash are they're gonna make in this world? We can do that for students and staff, but I feel like when we think about ourselves, we want to be humble. We want to be like mindful or whatever. But I just want to ask you what you think, like what is your potential for impact?

Jami: Wow, that's a hard question. I think that now more than ever the potential for students who have really sound concepts in understanding themselves and others, and teachers who have that sense of feeling cared about, and that it's explicitly taught and talked about. That our emotions are, that our interpersonal relationships are, and that it's okay to have those things be focus points for our year. I think that potential for impact is astronomical.

I think that's where the future is headed for those that have that capacity and for those young people who have such a different thought about the future than even we did as young students. I think that that is an absolute necessity for our both our students and our staff. So I think the impact will resonate far beyond the community, but needs to be present all over.

Angela: Right, right. I agree with you. I think the conversation we had today, normalizing this conversation in our schools and making emotion and self-awareness just a normal part of the process because it really is learning. Like we're in the business of teaching and learning.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

This understanding who we are, how our brains are wired, how our emotions are wired, how our body responds in relation to the academic learning and the skill sets required and the resilience that's needed and the potential and capacity like what do I believe is possible for myself. Like normalizing this conversation with students and staff I think is going to be that explosion of potential that—I call it the portal of possibility where it will just expand beyond even probably our comprehension, as you and I are discussing it in this moment right now.

Jami: Absolutely.

Angela: Yeah.

Jami: Yeah. I think one last thought on that and one last reflection, if I may, is that—

Angela: Yes, please.

Jami: In working with my leadership team that the piece that we have talked about, and something that always keeps us grounded in this and able to kind of get back to the core of this is to always try something difficult that you're uncomfortable with.

So that, I think, is where it keeps us fresh in that. It allows us to be in that moment of uncomfortability thinking that oh, I always have that future. I always have that thought and that emotion to jump back into. But it keeps us grounded with and connected with our students who are on the daily trying things that are hard and that they're uncomfortable with. So.

Angela: Exactly because that is the true definition of being a lifelong learner. I know education kind of speaks to let's be lifelong learners. But learning is awkward. It's hard. It's uncomfortable. It's messy. It just feels like

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

when you're new, it feels very clumsy. You maybe feel a little embarrassed or awkward. There's a lot of emotions that you have to be willing to feel in order to be a continuous learner or a lifelong learner.

What you just said is what absolutely connects you to the student experience, and to the teacher experience. Because teachers are learning all of the time. Students are always being asked to learn and grow. We don't want to just get into our office and be like ah, we've made it to the land where we can sit in comfort for the rest of our career. Right?

If there's anything Jaime does really well, it's she puts herself in harm's way. What I mean by that is that's a phrase my coach uses, my master coach from The Life Coach School uses, is always put yourself in harm's way. What that just means is be willing to feel uncomfortable. Put yourself in the land of discomfort because that's where the growth is, right?

Jami: Absolutely.

Angela: Yeah. Well, Jami is brilliant at that. I can tell you this. I just want you all to know her and say I heard her back when she was starting year three because this woman is making waves in the field of education. I anticipate her being much, much bigger than she probably can anticipate for herself right now. I'm just gonna hold space for that, Jami, because I want to be the person to say like I knew her back when. She is awesome.

I also want to say this. As awesome as Jami is, she's a human. You too can do exactly what Jami has done with her school and her staff and her own life personally and professionally. This isn't outside of your possibility. It's really a matter of—The only difference is Jami is willing to experience discomfort. The more you're willing to experience discomfort, the faster you can grow and evolve yourself as a school leader.

Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

So as much as I want to tell you Jami's a unicorn, she's actually a real life human. I'm looking at her right now on Zoom. It hasn't been easy. So when you hear success stories like this, and we're celebrating all summer long all of my different clients and their accomplishments. I want you to know like underneath that success has been failures and attempts and frustrations and hard conversations and hard conversations with ourselves.

So if you are willing to do those things, you will be successful. Your success is inevitable, just as it was for Jami. So Jami, thank you so much for your honesty, your openness, your authenticity, and just your brilliance. Thank you for sharing your brilliance with the with the audience today because I know that this is just the beginning for you, and it's magical to watch. So it's an honor to be your coach.

Jami: Well, thank you for having me on the podcast Angela and for coaching me.

Angela: You're welcome. We will be in touch very soon. Have an amazing day everybody. We'll talk to you next week. Take care bye.

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Ep #249: Time and Emotional Management While Leading a Brand-New School with Jami

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