

## Ep #257: Selling Your School Vision (Part 2)



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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## Ep #257: Selling Your School Vision (Part 2)

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 257.

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

Hello my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday. I hope you had a fabulous Thanksgiving holiday with your family if you're from the US. If you're not, I hope you had a fabulous weekend with your family. Doesn't matter. I hope you all had a fabulous weekend. We had an amazing weekend. So happy to be here with you today and dive into selling your school vision part two. Here we go. I'm going to just go for it. Get your pen, get your paper. Let's do this. Okay.

Last week, we talked about the troubles with a school vision and why we don't have one, usually it's non-existent. Or if it is, it's just intangible. It's out there in the ethers. So you've got to do step one before you step two. If you haven't listened to step one, which is last week's podcast, tune into that podcast because this work will not be relevant or applicable until you do step one. Okay?

So today we're going to talk about how to sell the school vision, how to get people on board, how to create buy in. So when you think about selling your school vision, all that means is that you're offering it to them in a way, you're communicating it to them in a way that is understandable, first of all, and compelling and interesting. It's what they want to buy into. Right? We have to create the desire for them to buy into the vision, right?

Let's talk about, first, why this is a challenge. It's a challenge when the vision isn't clear. So either you have a vision and people don't understand it, or you don't even talk about it. Have you ever done that? Where you

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have a school vision, you thought a lot about it, you see it in your mind, you can imagine and envision what it feels like, but you never talk about it. You don't articulate it. You don't bring it up. You don't talk about it in a staff meeting or in a bulletin or in your newsletter out to families. You don't share it with your peers or your district colleagues.

When the vision isn't clear or it's obscure or not visible at all, how can people buy into it? It's like selling cars, but never advertising that you have cars to sell. How could people possibly know to buy from you if they don't know what you're selling, or that you have anything to sell at all? Your vision is the product, your leadership product, that you're selling. You are selling your vision as the product of your leadership, as the value that you're contributing to the school as a leader.

So if your vision isn't clear, or it's obscure, or it's not visible, or understandable, or if it's not tangible or relatable. If it's very fluffy language, very education-ese speak, right. If it's very fluffy and oh the vision is for rainbows and daisies and butterflies, and everything's at ease and at peace and a calmness and nothing goes wrong. We don't have to solve any problem. That kind of stuff, no. Nobody wants a vision like that because nobody buys into it. They don't believe in it. They don't think it's possible. So they dismiss it. Okay.

Another reason why it's a challenge is that we don't implement it on the daily. It's not a part of the culture. So maybe we do all this work with our stakeholders and develop a vision, a shared vision, as they say, but that's where it lands. That's where it stops. Kind of on the journey, on the path, there's a stop sign, and it stops there. It doesn't keep going forward, right? It's not a part of the culture. It's not integrated into who you are as a school. Okay?

Another reason it's a challenge is that people don't believe in it because they don't see the value in it. I'm gonna hammer this all the way home on

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this podcast. People will never buy into anything if they don't see the value in it.

If you have a school vision but they don't see the value of it, they don't see the benefit of it, or the outcomes or the desired results. If you haven't articulated the results, the benefits of those results, the short term outcomes, the long term outcomes, what's in it for everybody involved, they will never buy in. People want to know with your school vision what's in it for them? Why should they buy in? What value does it provide them? What's the point? They have to see what's in it for them? Okay.

So what school leaders have been taught to do is go through all that work of creating the vision and then post it around the school, put it in the newsletters, and add it to your site improvement plan, right. So that there's alignment with this document and that document. Now we're saying we're aligned. Come on. That does not equal alignment. If actions and results are not aligned with the vision, we don't have a clear alignment connection. Okay.

You can say it all you want. You can spend time spinning on writing it all you want. You can put it in your site improvement plan. That does not create results, right? What we're not taught how to do, and this is what I want to teach you how to do as school leaders, is to develop a vision that people believe in and relate to. You're not taught how to communicate it so that people can relate to it, and they can buy in and believe in it and connect to it. We need to make it tangible and measurable.

You know what? We need to make it fun. We want to make this journey a fun process. We're striving towards utopia, right. We're striving towards the Nirvana of the perfect school experience. We might as well have fun on the way, right?

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We have to know that this vision is ever evolving. It's not a race we're looking to cross the finish line. It's going to mold and evolve. It's going to be messy. We're going to have hiccups. I call them pitfalls. We're going to have obstacles and pitfalls and hiccups along the way. We're going to get distracted. Pandemic's are going to come and knock us off our feet. We're going to have to shake ourselves off and get some rest and reboot and try again.

We want to just know that is a part of the process. Distractions happen, interruptions happen. We get off course. Circumstances that are completely out of our control take us off course. That doesn't matter. We're going to know that those things are going to happen. They're going to be a part of the vision, right? Because the vision isn't dynamic. It's not static. It's dynamic.

So the solution to being able to sell your school vision is to successfully know how to sell that vision to staff, students, and school community. So once you've done the work in part one of creating it. I'm talking about you doing the work as a school leader to create it for yourself and then going out there and, of course, getting buy in, in terms of getting input on that vision. Because you don't want to just have a silo vision, right? But the simple solution to your problem of getting buy in is to know how to sell it. That's what this is about.

So let's talk about the concept of selling because I use this word very intentionally because the word selling might be off putting or uncomfortable for you to think about it that way, but I want to talk to you about this. If the concept of selling feels uncomfortable, I want you to consider this. You're not some slimy car salesperson trying to manipulate or coerce people into buying something that they don't want or that doesn't serve them.

You're offering them a solution that they want, a vision that feels good, a vision they can relate to. So when I talk about selling, you're not trying to

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coerce or to manipulate or to try and convince people into having something or taking something on that they don't really want. That's different than offering them a very clear and tangible vision that they want.

Look, your school community, they want a leader who's willing to lead them. They want somebody who has a clear and tangible vision. They want systems in place that make life easier for them. They want the same thing you want. They want a thriving successful school that's a wonderful place to work. They want to believe that your vision is possible. They want to buy in. They're desperate for a leader who has a vision, who's willing to make decisions, who's willing to sell that vision hard and consistently, and every single day, commitment 100%. When you're committed 100%, they are. They want this.

This is what selling your vision is. It's helping people see that what they want to experience as a teacher, or as a student, or as a parent is actually available to them. It's possible. They have to feel your vision for them viscerally. Our job as a leader is to paint this vision so clearly that they can feel what it will be like to experience it and to be in that space.

So in the workshop that I offered last month on selling your school vision, you can go onto Vimeo. If you email me, you can get the link. Go on to Vimeo, watch the training, but it's in video format. I talk about the sales triad.

The sales triad is just another version of the trust triad that I instill in all of my empowered principals. That is trusting yourself first so that you can trust other people, but you've got to trust the process. So you've got to trust your vision and yourself to relay that vision and the work and that your vision is good enough. It's the right vision. You've got to trust that other people want to experience that vision and have the same vision as you and are capable of achieving the vision. You've got to believe in the process of going from where you're at to where you want to be, the process of bridging that gap

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from where your school is at and being honest about that into developing into the school that becomes that vision.

So going on the scale from one to 10. Maybe you're at a four, maybe you're at a five, maybe you're at a two. But moving up step by step, rung by rung, getting towards that vision. There has to be trust in the process. If you don't trust, how can they trust, right?

So the process for selling your school vision is three more steps. Number one, coaching. You've got to coach yourself. You have to be 100% sold on your own vision. What do you expect others to buy it if you don't believe in it or you don't think it's possible. You're never going to sell with conviction if you don't believe in the vision being possible 100%.

Now, are there times where you have dips in thought and in doubt? Of course, but that doesn't mean you don't take a breath, take some rest, and recommit. That's what I do with this business every single day. With my mission of getting every school leader a mindset and leadership and certified life coach like myself. Until every single school leader has a coach, I will not rest. I will not give up. I will not stop believing and committing to the process. Okay.

Number one, coach yourself. Number two, you have to advertise. Advertise your vision. You've got to sell it. You've got to communicate it. How can people know about it? You have to show the vision. You have to sell the vision. You have to talk about the vision. You have to offer the vision to the people, and to describe the value that it offers. You advertise it as the best thing since sliced bread. It's the best thing. It's the best thing for the school, best thing for them.

Then you have to define, which is step three, very specifically, how the process, the visionary process helps them achieve their desired results. I know you have a vision so that you can become the school leader who

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succeeds and gets kids where they need to be and develops your teachers into magnificent teachers. That's your goal. You've got to sell everybody else on what's in it for them.

This is the secret sauce. How does your vision help them achieve their desired results? Not what do you want them to do, what they want them to do. What they want to experience, what they want to feel, what they want to achieve, how they want to think about themselves and their work and their contribution to the world.

So, step one, the process of coaching yourself. As I said before, there are going to be days when you wonder if that vision is truly possible. Your head's going to be on your desk, tired, exhausted, frustrated, something, overwhelmed, and doubt is going to creep in. It's going to waver your commitment. Just know that that's normal.

It's your job as the leader to remind yourself why you decided on this vision and to not change it. Don't change it as the tides come in and out in the wind blows this way and that way. There's always going to be a new direction, a new shiny object, a new set of standards, a new priority. It's normal for you to doubt. That's just part of it. Don't write that off as something's gone wrong, or that you're doing it wrong, or that you chose the wrong vision.

It's your job to coach yourself and remind yourself as the leader of your school why you decided on this vision, why you chose it, why it matters for you, your staff, your students, and your community. Your vision isn't only to keep you motivated. It's much bigger than that. It's about the people you lead. This vision is their vision.

You aren't leading them to fill up your ego and add it to your resume. You're leading them because you want them to accomplish their dreams and their goals and their life. That's why you're in school leadership. You

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want to trust parents to trust and love the school they send their children to. You want students to learn what they need to learn and have fabulous lives and contribute to the world in the way that ignites their spirit. You want teachers who love where they work and who they work with and their job and what they do and enjoy their careers. Because they're making a difference in the world that they set out to make.

Do you see it? It's all about you creating a portal of possibility for them with your vision. The vision that has them in mind. So list all the reasons why your vision is your favorite vision. Why is this vision the next best step for your school? What do you love about your vision? How are you sold on your vision?

It's like being in love with a purchase that you make. When you buy something you absolutely love. I don't care whether it's a purse, a pair of shoes, a new bed, a new car, a new house, a pair of earrings, whatever. But when you're so in love with something, you feel like you won the lottery. You feel like this is the best sweater I've ever owned. It's cozy. It's warm. It's comfortable. I would wear it every day if I could.

Your vision has to feel that way for you. It's a winning the lottery experience. It's a win/win. You love it. It loves you back. You're just having a love fest. You want to believe that there is no other vision that's right for your school. There's no other vision you wish to adopt or implement at your site.

Now, if you're selling yourself again, if you go back to part one of this and you feel like you have to sell yourself all over again. If this sounds like a repeat from the first challenge, it is and here's why. Your thoughts, what you think about over and over again on a regular basis, determines whether you make progress towards your vision or not.

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When you remind yourself every single morning this is my vision. This is why. This is why it's important. This is how I know it's possible. You are 100% times more likely to create the thriving school you do want. Because when you're thinking about how possible it is and how amazing it is for staff and students and how you're not spending time thinking about how it isn't possible, and how things are so terrible, and how you're never going to make it, and how awful people are, and how your boss is so mean, and how nobody's listening to you.

Those thoughts, they throw you into the overwhelm cycle. That is the energy. When you're discouraged, you're overwhelmed, you're exhausted. You're going into the overwhelm cycle. That cycle of overwhelm and confusion and doubt and scarcity, it never ever leads you towards your vision.

Here's what does. Trust, faith, commitment, patience, certainty, appreciation, and belief, and possibility. Those are the emotions that keep you going forward. That's what keeps you striving. That's what keeps you into massive action. That's what keeps you making decisions with intention and constraint.

Step two advertise. People cannot know about your vision unless you personally live and breathe it. You want to talk about your vision all the time to everyone. I do this with my business, with coaching for school leaders. I talk about it to everyone. I talked about it on my personal social media pages, on my business social media pages, in the Facebook group, to my friends and family. I don't care. They don't have to like it. They don't have to listen to it. If they don't want to buy into my vision, it's okay. I'm gonna keep talking about it until I connect and work with the people who do. Until I bring those people into my awareness.

I promise you, if you're thinking like this, and if you want to be thinking and feeling like this and loving your life as a school leader and having a vision

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that works for you and kids and your teachers, and you believe it's possible, you're on board. You're buying into my vision of what can be possible for you. My vision isn't about me, it's about you. Your vision isn't about you, it's about them. Do you see it? The more you love it, the easier it is to talk about, the more you make your vision of who you are as a leader. You embody the vision.

So focus on how the vision makes you the best version of yourself. You do that by talking to people about how the vision makes their work better, easier, and helps them achieve their own vision. It's so much easier, and it's more fun to do than trying to convince people or manipulate them or facilitate them into believing. Right?

Step three. This step is the complete difference between school leaders who have buy in and school leaders who don't. So buckle up, buttercup, I've said it a million times, and I'm gonna repeat it. I want you to write it down. Stop and pause. Push replay. Whatever you need to do to get this into your lovely, brilliant brain. Your vision is not about you or the district.

It's about the people who are rolling it out. The people who are boots on the ground, working towards that vision every single day. The people who must see how the vision benefits them and those they're serving. So for you to create buy in, you must understand for yourself how your vision and the school vision supports their vision.

So here's what you need to do to make this a success. Share the value of the vision for others. Why should they invest time and energy into this vision? You want to ask yourself that question and actually answer it. What's in this vision for them? Why is this the best investment for them to buy in to your vision? How is it a win/win? You want them to believe you're on the same team. This vision is their vision. It's going to help them make life easier, better, solve problems faster, create solutions for themselves and students more quickly.

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How do they get on board? What actions do they have to take? You have to articulate this. You have to know if I'm a school teacher and I'm listening to my principal with this vision, what are the steps I need to take? Make it easy for them to buy in. Make it easy for them to get on board.

How will they know they're making progress? What measurements are in place, and how can they celebrate? You have to define these things for them. Your job is to make the school vision so easy, so simple, and so clear that it feels like a no brainer for them. That they feel silly not buying into the vision because it's so clear. It's so simple. It's so valuable to them.

The results of this work, and I'm not saying this isn't work for you. It is work. This is the work I work on with my clients every single week. So I know it's work. We put a good 30 minutes into coaching on it. Then my principals go back and work on it. They do spend time on it, but they value the time. Here's why.

The results you create are that you have a vision you can use because there's a clear process. You actually can implement the vision. You love that it's so easy to create buy in. You don't feel like you're a cheesy car salesman. You're just out there embodying the vision. You are the person who gets the school to the vision that you want. People love it because they see the value in it for them.

What happens for you the long term benefits is that you have such leadership focus. It's so crystal clear to you that you don't feel overwhelmed. You stop being confused. You stop not knowing. You stop being in indecision. You stop procrastinating. You have an idea of what you're going to get up and do every single day.

Your team does the same. They know exactly what to do and how to achieve their vision. Then students and staff benefit from your clarity and

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teachers clarity. Ultimately, you leave behind the most beautiful, successful leadership legacy as a school leader.

Now, here are a few pitfalls you want to avoid in this process. Okay, Pitfall number one is making the vision complicated. The best vision is simple, clear, and manageable. So avoid being overly wordy, overly complicated, or unfocused. Less is best. I know that doesn't seem true.

You want to capture all the things, but the more you try to fix, more you try to cover, the more you try to be everything to everyone, the more vanilla it gets, the more flatline it gets, and the more unappealing it gets. Nobody cares. It doesn't sell. It's not compelling at all because it's too much. People don't want to buy into too much. They want to buy into the one thing that they believe is going to give them the best bang for the buck.

Pitfall number two is just what I said. Do not fix all problems at once. Say focused. Choose the one area you believe will yield the best results. That doesn't mean you're going to only have one focus for the entire vision of your career or for your school. You're just choosing one at a time. That's why this plan is flexible. Rung four, rung five, rung six, right. You can always choose to focus on another area the following trimester, the following year.

Many problems, this is just a little side note here, but I want you to know when you feel the urge to fix all the problems. What really happens is when you constrain and say no to some of the other things that aren't priorities, many problems that come up, they've resolved themselves. When one problem is solved, other problems get solved. So you want to go for the best bang for your buck.

Pitfall number three, not focusing and speaking to the value of the vision. People are motivated by what's in it for them. So give it to them. But not doing this, not spending time identifying what's in it for them the value, the

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short term benefits, the long term benefits, the extended benefits. Not doing that and not spending time on that is going to result in less people buying in, if any. Commitment will fade when people do not see the value in it for them.

Pitfall number four, not measuring or not celebrating. What's the point of all of this work in all of what you do and what teachers do every single day if you're not going to measure progress. Measuring progress isn't a problem. It's fun. That's what makes working towards the goal fun. You want to be celebrating.

What's the point of hitting all these milestones and increasing your scores or getting a higher attendance rate, whatever tangible measurements you're creating or having more people want to work at your school. What's the point of hitting any of those milestones and achieving the goal if you're not going to take time to acknowledge it and cherish it and celebrate it? This is why we're doing the work. We're having fun. We're enjoying ourselves. We're celebrating the wins. Okay.

So in summary, part one is about not having a distinct and focused vision. So go back and listen to last week's podcast on how to create, assess, and determine. I want you to know if you can't remember the words, it's C-A-D CAD. Create, assess, determine. Challenge number two is getting people on board with your vision. That's also CAD, coaching, advertise, define. Those are the steps you want to take.

Let me just sell you on the value of taking time to do this work. The compounded benefits are that you just get to enjoy your job. You get to feel on track. You don't have to feel behind. Students are on track. Teachers are on track. You know how to solve problems. Parents are feeling connected. The district's happy with your work. You get to accomplish more because you are planned and you are constrained and you are focused.

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When you think that you need to do everything at once, it actually spreads you so thin you get nothing done well. When you take the time to tackle one thing at a time and be very planned and intentional about it, you get to lead from a very calm state of mind. You're going to fulfill your obligations as a leader while working less hours. Do you hear me? Being burnt out and overworking and being over consumed and over scheduled, all of those things, it does not serve your school.

What serves your school is fulfilling obligations consistently over the course of time, staying constrained, and not letting yourself get burned out. When you're not burned out, you make clear decisions. You make them with intention. You use the lens of your leadership values to make decisions about your vision and about your next steps, which means you better manage your resources, your time, your energy, your physical resources, the people resources, all the human resources you have.

Your experience of school leadership becomes more pleasurable and enjoyable, which equals your sustainability and your teacher sustainability. When you're sustainable when you feel like you've got the energy to keep going for no matter how long it takes because you put rest into the plan and you put downtime into your plan and fun into your plan and vacations into your plan, you become more valuable as a leader to your district and to your employer, which makes you be more impactful, be more influential, and create a bigger legacy.

Your career and school leadership expands when you do this work. I cannot tell you how amazed I am at every single school leader who has gone through the Empowered Principal™ program. These men and women have gone through one year, two year, three years. They're killing it. They are shining. You hear them on the podcast. I can't even make it up how amazing they are. They are phenomenal leaders, and you are a phenomenal leader.

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Join us. Join the Empowered Principal™ program. You will never regret it. It's the best investment of your life. I can't wait to work with you. Join me in the Empowered Principal™ program. We're gonna get your vision set up, on track, and in forward motion. I will talk with you all next week. Have an amazing week. Take care. Bye.

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