

## Ep #265: How to Delegate



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With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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## Ep #265: How to Delegate

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 265.

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 and happy Tuesday. I've got something down to earth and practical. So last week, I was busy talking about big things, meta things, taking yourself to the next level. This one is just down boots on the ground working okay. I just got off a call with a client of mine, one of my favorites. They're all my favorites. She's been working with me for a few years now. She finally called and said, I'm ready to learn how to delegate.

I love it so much. It takes all of his time, right, when we're new, and we don't want to delegate, and we just have that need to hold on. Eventually, you're going to hit a point where number one, you don't feel the urge to control everything and micromanage every little thing anymore. Two, you just can't sustain it. It does not allow you to sustain that level of working.

Let me tell you, this client of mine, she does have a smaller school. So she has been doing all kinds of things like maintenance work and custodial work. She's doing office work. She's doing secretarial work. She's like doing all of it. I'm like what is happening right now? No. We're going to teach the art of delegation. I just want you all to know how to delegate, whether you're a first year or a veteran. This is a very, very important skill.

Actually, it is essential as a school leader because you cannot scale your impact if you do not learn how to delegate, and you do not know how to

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handle delegation, meaning the feelings that you feel when you delegate, okay. So I'm going to talk about this, what it means, the benefits, and the value of delegation.

I want to sell you hard on why it's better for you and for the people you're delegating to. I'm going to talk about some thought obstacles that get in your way. Then I'm going to teach you a process like planning to delegate like before you've actually delegated and then the process of delegation. Okay, let's dive in.

So, first of all, I want you to think about what delegation means to you. How do you define delegation? What do you make it mean about you and about other people and the task that you're delegating? Think about this for a second. Everybody who doesn't delegate, I'm going to speculate that you have a negative definition of it.

Like delegation is dumping and burdening other people. It's dumping tasks that I don't want to do. It's burdening other people who are busy. It means I'm being irresponsible. There's some definition around delegation that doesn't feel good to you, which is probably why you're not doing it. Okay.

I want you to think about your definition. What is delegation to you right now. Then we're going to change it so that you can feel better about it. Because delegation is an essential skill that all leaders need to be able to have a greater impact, right, to get everything that needs to get done done. As a school leader, you shouldn't be plunging toilets or serving pizza every day or unlocking and locking the gates or doing dismissal every day.

Now, if you want to do those things and you have the time to do those things and you live to do those things, by all means, go ahead, right? I'm not saying any task on your campus is higher above you or below you or anything like that. That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm saying is your role as a school leader is to be an instructional leader, a visionary.

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Your job is to mentor and coach your staff and support students and families. Like you are in the business of people in that leadership role. You have administrative duties. You have managerial duties, but you have visionary duties and instructional, mentoring, and coaching duties. Okay.

So this is where it comes down to prioritization. It's so easy to get caught up in those little mini daily things that need to get done for the operation of the school. For the functional, foundational operation of your school yes, those things have to get done. But if you find yourself bogged down with operationals, then we want to take a look at that. Okay.

So my question to you is why don't you delegate? Answer that question actually. Why don't you delegate? Because you don't want to burden people, because it's faster to do it yourself, it's easier to do it yourself. You want it done right the first time. You're just right there, you might as well do it. You don't want other people to think you're abdicating responsibility. What will other people think if I delegate? Am I over delegating? Think about all those judgments and thoughts that you have that don't feel good.

So ask yourself what is going to happen if you delegate? What terrible things will happen? What's the worst case that could happen if you delegate something, right? It doesn't get done at all, or it gets done terribly or you have to clean up a mess. Like I get it. I know because I had a hard time delegating.

So your brain wants to give you all of these reasons why don't bother delegating because it's just easier to do it myself right the first time. Notice that. You think your brain is telling you that you're the one doing it right. Okay. Which is fine, I'm sure you are doing it right because you're amazing. Okay.

But really consider why don't you currently delegate? What do you think is going to go wrong if you do? Just notice the thoughts. Put those into a

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STEAR cycle. How do you feel when you think that thought? How do you show up? The action line is do not delegate. I have to spend time doing all of these things myself, but what is the result of that?

So what is the cost of not delegating? Are you getting the result you want if you're doing all the things and not delegating? Maybe the answer is yes. But for most school leaders, they find themselves overwhelmed. They are struggling to prioritize. When they don't prioritize, they have no idea what to delegate. Okay.

So I want to offer this, what is the benefit of delegating? You've got to sell yourself on why delegating certain tasks is far worth it, not just for you, not to just take something off your plate, but what's the benefit for your school? Why do they need you doing some tasks and not others? Why do they prefer you to be in that leadership and mentorship role versus plunging toilets, right?

I just can't get over it. My client doesn't have a day custodian. They have a service that comes in in the evenings and cleans the school, but she has no one on campus to help her with the day. I'm like what happens if a child gets sick or there's a spill? Like I just can't imagine that. But granted, my school was double the size of her. So anyway if you don't have a custodian, God bless you. I feel for you. We should talk about how to get you one.

Anyway, okay. You gotta sell yourself on the value. Like me, once I figured out the power of delegation and the benefit, not just to me, but really to my staff, that was everything. I was so much more available to them. I had so much more time. I wasn't rushing, and I wasn't snapping at them because I was so busy and I was trying to cover everything.

First, sell yourself on why it's so great. I want you to even go to the place where you're willing to allow B minus work from somebody else. Like I know you're going to do it A plus, but allowing somebody else to go make

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copies and have the be B minus copies, or because you feel a little less than control. Like I won't know what's going on if I delegate this task. Well, if I don't do dismissal every day, I'm not going to see the kids.

Well, where else could you see the kids? You could see them in classrooms, working with teachers, mentoring and instructional leadership, right? You don't have to be doing it at dismissal. Okay, just be thinking about that.

I also want you to kind of burn down this idea of burdening people. Here's the thing. Number one, here's why it's worth the cost of B minus work. 80% of your 100% is better done than done by you. Let me say that again. So I know you can do every task at 100% and you give 100% for everything. Let's just call that a fact. Are you willing to let your 100% become 80%? Because done is better than perfect. Done is better than being done by you. You hear me?

If somebody else can go do it, and it's at 80% but you don't have to do it, that's a gift. It's called the gift of time, the gift of energy. What you're getting in return is time and energy and focus because you don't have to worry about that thing anymore. Okay, your time is way more valuable than perfection. So many of you overwork and overexert and over schedule yourselves because you're striving to be perfect, but your time is more valuable than that. Let other people help you.

Now, the second thing. So my client said, I can do it better. I can do it faster. Number two she said I feel like I'm not as much in control. I would like to offer that you're in more control because you're spending your time on the actions that are the highest leverage actions for you as a leader. Meaning you will create bigger outcomes and bigger results when you aren't spending your time making copies and opening gates etc. Okay.

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You are more in control when you are in the position of a visionary leader and an instructional leader. When you're in classrooms, when you're talking with teachers, you're spending your time on instruction and helping people solve people's problems. A lot of teachers come to us with problems, which are working with students and working with parents. When you're out there doing those kinds of things and when other people are taking care of those foundational operational activities and tasks, you're more available to solve bigger problems. Okay and to mentor more people. That puts you more in control, not less.

Number three burdening people. I want you to look at the tasks that you're considering delegating, and I want you to ask yourself the truth. Because many of these tasks, when I talk to a principal, and they're like oh, I wish I could delegate this, this, and this. I'm like first of all, those are super easy. They're super simple. They're quick. Most people on the planet could do that for you with a little training or a little information. Then you would never have to think about it again. Okay?

Consider the fact that there are people on your campus or in your sphere who want to help you. I'm going to talk more about the process of delegating in a minute, which includes asking or getting permission. So for those of you who are worried about burdening people, part of the process that I teach is asking permission to delegate. You're not dumping. You're asking, are they willing to? Are they able to? Can they fit it into their schedule? You're not just dumping it onto them without permission.

But what if it were true that people aren't burdened by your task and they want to help you? I think that's true most of the time. People cannot say yes to your delegation if you don't ask them. Sounds kind of silly to say it out loud, but it's amazing how many times I've said have you even asked somebody?

They're like yeah I know exactly who could do it, but I just haven't asked them because I'm afraid I'm going to burden them. It might not be a burden.

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Have you thought of that? Until you ask them they don't know that you want them to do it. People cannot say yes. If you don't ask them.

What if you decided to try on the thought when you ask people to say yes? I love that thought. I think that all the time clients are saying yes all the time. They want to come in and be coached. We had a great time. I invite them to try on thoughts, and they're a yes. It's wonderful. Try it on with your teachers, okay.

You have to change your self-concept about who you are as a school leader and the value that you contribute to your school. Now, this is uncomfortable when you're new. It might be uncomfortable if you've been in the business for a while because it's almost like we don't want to evolve our self-concept into the version of ourselves that's a B-O-S-S, that's a boss lady, that's a CEO of her school, getting stuff done, and that our time is precious. Your time is an asset. You are an asset.

You have to think of yourself at that level. That makes you uncomfortable because it feels like you're putting yourself on a pedestal next to your teachers, but that's not true. You're not putting yourself on a pedestal, you are the leader. Your self-concept is I'm leading this school. I need to be doing these tasks. I need other people to be doing those tasks so that together we create a beautiful school.

Everybody's equal in terms of their contribution because without custodians and without secretaries and without yard duty people and without paras, our school could not function at a basic foundation operational level, right?

We want to give love and credit and acknowledge equally everybody's contribution from bus drivers to maintenance folks to our special ed teams and our counselors, our nurses, our clerks, all of them. Everybody's contributing. Those people are highly valuable. You are not on a pedestal



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above them. You just need to assume the role in your brain, your self-concept, okay?

Think about what you can contribute when you are free from taking care of all these foundational operations on your own. Consider how much more impact and influence and legacy you will have as a leader when you're not down working on the ground, literally whether you're shoveling. This was one of the other things my principal was doing. She was out shoveling the driveway. No, there are people who can say yes to doing that.

It's so funny. When she finally went out and asked, there was a parent who had been in the snow removal business in her prior town wherever she lived before. She lived somewhere like way up north. She's like I will totally do this for you. Not even a problem. We have all the things. Done, right? You have to ask the question. So I want you to think about all the little, tiny things you're doing that somebody else could be doing and asking yourself what's holding you back from delegating. All right.

Even if people are busy, and that's true, we all have busy lives. Ask yourself why it's still beneficial to delegate. What's in it for them, what's in it for you, and what's in it for the greater school, okay?

Now, a note on delegating versus abdicating. Delegating is knowing what you want to delegate, and what you need done, and why that task is important and valuing the completion of that task and believing that other people are capable of completing the task to your satisfaction, to your standard. Then train them as explicitly as possible so they can meet your expectation, and they don't have to fail on their own to find out what you expected of them.

So many times we ask people to do something, and they do it, and we're like oh, not like that. I don't want it like that. I don't like it like that. I'll just do it myself. But we never told them what to expect. So delegating is when you

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know what you want and why it's important and why it's valuable. You trust and believe that other people are capable. Then you tell them what you want, how you want the outcome to look or feel or be right. You want to set them up for success so that people are more likely to say yes.

So when you delegate, it's important to be thinking about what they need to know to be successful so that number one, they can do it successfully every single time and they can repeat. Number two, the more successful they are, the less I have to think about it. Number three, the more you set people up for success, the more likely they will say yes the next time you ask them to take on a delegation, okay?

Now abdicating is when you either just don't want to do a task and you just throw it at somebody. You're like oh, get this off my plate. I don't want to do this. Or it's a task that you don't know how to do or you don't really love it, and you should be doing it but you're trying to avoid it.

I've done both. I've done the wrong way of delegating several times. So I've just dumped things off on people which they could do fine, but I didn't set them up. I didn't train them. I didn't tell them what I expected. Then I would be frustrated if it wasn't the way I wanted. Or I knew it should be me, but I didn't really know how to do it or want to do it.

Like my budget. I kind of gave that off to my secretary for a while until we got a new CBO who was like Angela, let's sit down. I'm going to teach you everything. He was so great. I told him Robert, for the first time, nobody's explained this to me, and I've been a school principal for four years. It's crazy.

But I was kind of silently abdicating all of the budgeting work to my secretary who was so brilliant by the way. She didn't mind. She wasn't complaining. She was like I'm happy to take that on for you, but that's something I really should have been more involved in. Until somebody

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trained me and told me the expectations, I didn't know. So that's just an example.

Okay, but you can see the difference between delegating responsibly and with intention and abdicating is a little more unintentional, a little more subconscious, a little more careless. Okay. This is how I can tell the difference.

Delegation, for me, feels empowering for both people. They want to do the task and feel confident that they can, and they feel empowered by my giving them a leadership opportunity or a task that they want to take on. I feel empowered because I've now empowered somebody else, and I've taken it off my plate. So it's a win-win. Delegation feels like a win-win.

Abdication feels negative for both people. They feel dumped on and underappreciated. You feel guilty for avoiding the task. Do you see the difference? So notice how you feel, notice how the other person's reacting, and I'm going to teach you how to plan and then how to delegate really quickly. So you'll know the difference by how it feels. All right?

Let's plan to delegate. These are some prompts you want to consider when you're planning to delegate. Who are you planning to complete this task? You might want to have a couple of names in mind. Is this a task that only you are qualified to complete? Notice if you feel attached to the thing that others are capable of completing. If you say no, other people cannot do this, I have to do this, why? Notice why. Are you attached to it because you don't want other people to do it? Are you truly the only person who is qualified to do that task?

Okay, if you absolutely could not take the task on. So I like to tell myself if I were out sick for a month, and I could not do my job, who would I delegate different tasks to and why? I like to just plan ahead of time. Like if I were to be out, what are the essentials that have to get done, and who would I want

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to do them. So that they know ahead of time if I'm ever out, I'm gonna count on you for this. If they know that and you know that, that's a win-win. Okay.

Now, does this person have the capacity to take on this task successfully? Why or why not? Notice your thoughts again. Then is there anybody else who could help you complete the details of that task, okay. Because sometimes there's a bigger task and there's all these little things. So it might be multiple people that are taking on the role. So that's kind of your pre-planning for delegation.

Then the process is to ask them. You have to ask people if they're open to taking it on. Do not assume or assign without a conversation. That does not end well. It ends in disaster. So ask them first, then you communicate with them. Be explicit about the process, explain your standards. The more explicit the better. They cannot read your mind.

Number three, confirm. Confirm with them that they have accepted this task. Confirm that they comprehend the process, and confirm that they're on track. Don't just say great, run with it, dust your hands off, and never check in with them again. That's kind of what happens to you when you become a school leader, I know, but you don't want to do that to your team. Okay. So confirm with them.

Then number four, acknowledge. Be very intentional about thanking the person. Thank them with a gift card or take them out for lunch or just thank them publicly. Give them a certificate, do something that acknowledges their effort, and be generous with your appreciation. They are going to be so much more willing to accept delegations in the future.

I love the art of delegation. It freed my mind, my heart, my soul. It made life so much easier, so much more fun. You know what? My teachers actually loved that I trusted them. I trusted my staff so deeply that they wanted to

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rise to the occasion. I want this for your staff and your team. So let me know how it goes. If you have questions about delegation, don't hesitate to reach out. You know where to find me, [angelakellycoaching.com](http://angelakellycoaching.com). Let's go. Talk to you next week. I love you guys. Bye.

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