

Ep #271: Coaching for Experienced Principals with Rebecca



Full Episode Transcript

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Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 271.

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: Well hello my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast, and welcome to the month of March. I'm really excited to have one of my very special clients on as a guest today. Her name is Rebecca, and she has had the most amazing school year. The last two of our coaching sessions have just been pure celebration. So I said you have to be on the podcast while your energy is so empowered and so amazing.

Rebecca gladly accepted my offer. She's here today to share with you her story and her journey and how she has been able to apply coaching to – I think one of the most amazing things that Rebecca has done is just really taken ownership and control over her time and her calendar and her schedule, and been able to actually go from feeling overwhelmed and behind schedule all the time and overworking to ahead by using the three month plan. So she's going to tell you all about that. So Rebecca, welcome to the podcast.

Rebecca: Hello, thanks for having me.

Angela: We're so happy you're here. So I'm going to let Rebecca introduce herself. Tell you a little bit about her and her school leadership experience and what brought her to coaching. We're just gonna dive in and have a conversation about all of the amazingness that Rebecca has been able to do this year.

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Rebecca: Awesome. Well, thank you. So I am Rebecca, and I work in a rural school district in Ohio. I've been here for my entire career. This is year 28. Started here as a teacher then moved on to a pseudo-admin role as gifted coordinator for several years and then obtained my admin license and took a position as an elementary school principal/gifted coordinator. I had to do both jobs at first, but then was able to peel that back and just focus on being a school principal.

This is year oh, I get confused. 11 or 12 in my year as a principal and in my current position. So I've been at this school, this is the same school I did my principal internship in. I've been able to build a great sense of connection and community with the school and the students and the staff. So I've really enjoyed that.

Coaching became something that I really wanted to do for myself. I went through some changes in my life and used some counseling and coaches to kind of help me through that aspect. I finally got to the point where I was done feeling tired and overwhelmed and like I was constantly behind. After listening to some of Angela's podcasts I really thought this could really be it for me. I could really use this. So I was able to do the intro call and figure out that this might be what I needed to up my game and just feel better about the work that I'm doing.

Angela: Yes, exactly. I remember our call when you had said you had actually had some experience with life coaching before. So it wasn't brand new to you, which is really cool. The other thing I just loved about Rebecca is she's not a brand new leader. So I've had a couple of consults recently where people will say to me well, I know that you primarily work with brand new principals.

That's not true. About half of my clientele are actually veteran seasoned principals who want to continue to grow. They know the job, but they want to continue to grow. Like Rebecca here, she knows the basics of the job.

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She has a foundational skill set that she knows how to be a leader and lead her school into success. She just wanted to continue to evolve her ability to do that and grow her capacity.

So that's something that I love about Rebecca is that she's not brand new, and she doesn't have all the brand new questions. She takes this work to a much deeper level. What I've noticed with you, Rebecca, is I think that you have generated a sense of calmness within yourself so that you can apply this work at a pretty rapid pace.

Rebecca: I would agree. I mean if I think back to our first session and then to where we've been these last couple of weeks, every week that we've talked and coached, it's been something I've been able to turn around, implement, create my own plan with.

My stress level has greatly reduced over the course of the year. I feel good about the work that I'm doing. I don't feel like I'm constantly on that hamster wheel of oh my gosh, oh my gosh. There's so much to do. I've been able to say I'm doing the best that I can. I feel like I'm doing better work than I have been. It's a lot lighter feeling than it's been in the past.

Angela: Yes. So we were talking about how you felt before. When you think back to prior to coaching, can you describe what was the general emotional state that you were in on a regular basis?

Rebecca: I would probably say panic and just overwhelmed. I felt like no matter what I worked on, I was never ahead. I was never caught up. There was always something else that I had to do. Oftentimes, I would stay pretty late at work, but I would stay to the point where I was exhausted. I really was just wasting my time because I wasn't getting anything done.

Then I would go home and then just beat myself up for you wasted all that time that you could have gotten done X, Y, and Z, and I didn't get things

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done. Then I would just start again the next week feeling like I was behind and overwhelmed. Since coaching and planning, that perspective has shifted so much. Being able to pre plan what I need to do, decide when enough is enough, and be able to move on without worrying and without beating myself up. I mean that's just been a huge shift.

Angela: I know people are dying to know the how. Like how did you manage your time? People will say when they come to me, they're so overwhelmed. They're so exhausted, and they're so panicked. It's the pressure and the to-do list and the mandates and the people's expectations.

It does feel like a pressure cooker, and they feel trapped. They feel like they can't figure out how it would even be possible to feel in control of your time and to feel balanced and calm. So can you describe at least your experience of that process of going from that overwhelm and panicked and always feeling behind to the shift that happened for you personally?

Rebecca: I think the first thing that was really important was that three month plan and looking at what do I have to do? Kind of that brain dump of what are all the things that I have to do during this time. When we started coaching, it was prior to school starting. So what are all the things I have to do for the beginning of school? Having that all out on paper and deciding what was mine, what I could delegate was huge because it was all in one place. It was out of my head. I could come back and look at it and add other things that needed to be done.

Then from there, I mean I came in and met with my staff. I'm like I want to get all our dates and stuff. Like let's lay out all our events, let's get everything done so that we know where we're starting from, from day one. We did that within the first two weeks.

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I mean we've been using that calendar to kind of guide our big events and what we are doing. Before it was always kind of like we did it month by month. Now I'm like we know for the year where we're going. Then being able to kind of rotate through okay, like I just finished this three month plan. Now, let me roll over into the next three months.

So that's been super helpful. I think I was always a big idea person, and I could always kind of see where I wanted it to go, but it was all those details that I would always then be scrambling to kind of get into place. So with that three month plan that's been so helpful in using that model. Then I think once we got that part under control and started coaching on things like evaluations and email and schedules, it just started to – That was just one more layer I could peel away.

Now I had my plan for my observations and how to make it an easier streamlined process. Then I could peel away the next level about email and how much time I'm really going to give to that and what is that going to look like. My daily schedule and trying to share that out with staff too. Like peeling away one more layer. Like here's where I'm going to be. Kind of being transparent about it.

So all of that has really helped. It's been like chipping away like one piece at a time. I get one piece secured and then I can add another piece. That, I think, has been what's allowed me to go from constant panic mode into just a little bit more serene about everything and realizing I do have a plan. I do have things that I'm doing, and I do have a system to do it in.

That just alleviates a lot of the frantic moments that I used to experience probably throughout the day thinking about am I getting enough done or what else is on the to do list. It's really helped me to kind of focus on what's important right now and then still keeping things kind of on the horizon.

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Angela: Yeah. So a couple of things that stood out to me what you talked about was definitely the three month plan as the tool. But well, you said a lot of things I want to highlight so people really tune in and capture what you shared.

Number one, yes you used the tool, but you didn't use it yourself, just yourself. You used it with your team. I think that's fabulous because now you're not only not panicking because you're planning ahead, you've got the year mapped out, and then you chunk it into those three month segments. They now know the plan. They're not wondering well when is this event going to be and when's that event going to be. Everybody has the big picture. Then you also use the three month plan with them to break down into the details.

So the tools that you learn here and the coaching, they're not just for you. They're for you to share and utilize with your team. Because the way that you feel is going to be the energy in which you approach them. They're going to pick up on that energy. So if you're planning and you're calm and you're working ahead of schedule and modeling that for them, that's going to transfer over to them, which is awesome. I love that you did that.

The other thing, like kind of a tangent on this that you said. I think we were talking about this on one of our coaching calls. You actually shared your schedule. We'll talk more about that in a minute, but I know you took the schedule, but you actually shared it with your staff. So they knew where you were going to be and when and when you're available and when you were out, all of that. I do want to tap more into that conversation.

Then you also shared you just worked on one thing at a time. First, you worked on the schedule in kind of a big picture way. Then you broke that down. Then you got to your email schedule, and your teacher observation schedules. You didn't try to fix everything all at once.

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Rebecca: Yeah, I think that was a big key because I could feel like something was taken care of. I felt more confident about it. Then I felt like okay, I've got that under control. Now I can take on something else. Where before I did think like I was just trying to fix everything and kind of grasping in all these different directions and didn't really feel like I was being successful. But now that I've kind of tackled one thing and then moved to the next, it's been a much better system.

Angela: Right. I joke about it. I call it the whack a mole approach where you're just like playing the whack a mole game. That is what creates all of that anxiety and panic because you're running. You're running from here to there to try and fix all of the things, and you don't really end up fixing anything because you don't give one thing enough of your time and attention of focus to work down through the entire problem.

Versus okay, I'm just gonna focus on this until I can get a system that's on autopilot for the most part and then move on. That approach, it feels like it takes longer, but it actually goes faster. Right, Rebecca?

Rebecca: Oh, absolutely. I mean it was building one success on top of another on top of another in terms of those systems and being able to use that. So I was becoming more effective as I was working through them.

Angela: Yeah. So let's talk about you actually sharing your schedule with your staff. I mean I think people are listening, and they're going what? I would never do that. They want privacy and they want the flexibility to just do whatever they want to do.

That's because they're playing whack a mole, and they don't know what's coming up. So they don't want to tell people because they don't know that they can trust themselves to be consistent, let alone share that with somebody else and having people say well you said you were gonna be

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here, but you're not. Can you talk about your decision to share it with your staff, and how that's worked to your benefit?

Rebecca: Yes. So when we first started coaching, we talked about creating a daily schedule because I felt like I was getting pulled in multiple directions and kind of letting things take over my day instead of me really scheduling for that. So I created a schedule to kind of get me through my day. I decided that in order to help me be a little bit more accountable with it, I was going to share it with my staff.

So every year at the beginning of the year, I give out a packet that has the schedules for our specials, our duty schedule, our aid schedule, and then I included mine in that packet that I gave out the first day. Are you sure you're ready for this? But I did it.

It's been good because even though there are some days that I'm not always able to kind of match what I put out, there are days where people are oh I went to your office, but you weren't there. But I forgot that's when you're out of classrooms. Or they've stopped in my office and I'm still here when on my schedule I have marked to be out somewhere else. They're, aren't you supposed to be in classrooms? I'm like yeah, I'm getting there.

So it's been good. It kind of keeps me on my toes that way and keeping the commitment that I made to myself about what my day would look like. I have it framed, and it sits on my desk. So as I'm working I look up and I'm oh. This morning before my day went kind of a little bit awry, I was oh I'm totally on target. I have this time. I'm right on it.

There was some flexibility. We had a little bit of a busy day, but it helps me to stay on track, and it helps my staff to know kind of what my expectations for myself are and what they can expect. So I think it helps. But yeah, I never would have dreamed to put that in. Here's the schedule for our year,

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and that includes mine. It's been a positive thing. It's been helpful for me this year.

Angela: I mean what a great role model because we ask teachers to share their schedule. When are they teaching math and language arts? They have special schedules. They have a schedule that they have to adhere to and follow. As a leader, we're so overwhelmed. We think how could we possibly follow a consistent routine or a schedule?

But the truth is if you were to do kind of like a time audit and just watch yourself, we're habitual creatures. We actually do create some kind of a rhythm and consistency to our day as much as possible. But when you actually plan your day ahead of time, you're telling the time how you're going to spend it.

It's almost like a budget. It's like money, right? When we have money, we create a budget for it. We say we're going to spend this much on our home and this much on our car and this much on groceries. We come up with a defined amount of dollars that are allocated, and this is what you're doing. You're allocating minutes to the things that matter most.

Rebecca: When I was contemplating putting it out there, I did think I would ask every single one of my teachers to give me a schedule. So it was only fair that I gave one out in return. So yeah. So it's worked out really well this year. That's some practice that I don't see going away. I think it's helped me to really have my day with a framework of what's going to happen.

When I look at it too, it's yeah. What am I going to give my time to? When I look at it, I feel like it's the important thing. I do have to check in the office, but really I'm here for the students and the staff. So to be out and about with them as much as possible was the goal. So that's why we've been going.

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Angela: Okay, the first question I think is going to pop up in people's minds is number one, what happens when you have a wipe-out day? Because I know everyone has, I call them wipe out days. It's when the day presents something that you couldn't anticipate, and now you're in it. Like it wipes out your whole day. What would you say to that?

Rebecca: I have completely learned just during this time of coaching to give myself grace in that and be just because you've had one off day, it's fine. You'll pick it back up tomorrow. Whatever you had to address that day, that was most important. It was most important. Today was one of those days.

We had a big annual we call it dress your best or fancy luncheon. Then we had our Valentine celebrations today. So I had already kind of written this day as I know it's going to be busy. I know I'm just going to do a lot of checking in, a lot of helping facilitate activities. I was only gonna have a brief time in the morning to connect in some classrooms. I had a student issue that arose that was pretty critical that I had to address.

I was like at that time, that was most important. I had already granted that most of this day was going to be not my usual routines and not my usual focus. I just said that's what it has to be. Even at the end of the day, like today I'm tired, but I'm not beating myself up about all the other things that I didn't get done. I've already started taking some notes and things. I know what I'm gonna address on Monday and get back to routine.

So if I do have a day where things go awry, I'm not in that negative thinking mode anymore. I can kind of just shut that down and be okay, tomorrow's another day. We'll just get back at it.

Angela: Yeah. I love what you said because there's two steps here. Like number one when you're actually in the moment, when the incident happens, or the situation comes up, there's a moment that you actually just make a decision. Like before my day was planned, those were the most

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important things. Now I'm deciding with intention that this is now the most important thing.

You can remind yourself when your visceral reaction comes up and you're oh no, and you have that panic feeling. Your brain is going to say well, I'm not going to get to the things that I had planned to get. But in the moment you're like but right now, this is the most important thing I can be doing. This is the job of the day. Give yourself that grace. Then setting the intention to get back on track the next day.

The other thing I want to say to you people is if every single day feels like a wipeout day. Like you make plans and then you get interrupted, and you make plans and you get interrupted. That is different. Because if that's happening every single day on your campus, either you're in severe crisis mode and you need additional support, or my guess is that we haven't differentiated between true emergencies and non-emergencies and being able to train people what is an emergency, what's not.

I don't know how to say it delicately. Basically, we have trained people that I'm available 24/7 open door policy all of the time. There's no boundaries around your time. So people just feel like they can come in and that their problem is now your problem as soon as they need your attention. If they're used to getting that, setting a boundary is going to feel uncomfortable for you as the principal.

But what it sounds like you have intended is that my schedule comes first. These are the priorities, I call them the big rocks. You put them in. Then on the occasional wipeout day, grace and space is fine. But if that's a consistent problem, it's more of a scheduling issue and maybe a time boundary issue. Would you say that's true, Rebecca?

Rebecca: I would agree. Because before it was one of those things where I think I was responding to everything all the time, whatever the day

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presented. Where now I can balance that out. Just a shift of priorities, not just taking whatever comes my way and feeling like I have to address it at that moment. Because there were a lot of things that were sneaking in to control my day, which probably didn't need my attention right at that moment.

So now something has to be put off because I have something else that's more of a priority, I'm able to do that and not feel bad about it. Just be I will get to that later, or I will talk to you later or respond later. It's worked out. I mean that's worked out well. I don't feel heavy about it. I don't feel like I'm avoiding something I should be doing. It's actually very just empowering and just very light. Like I don't feel burdened down. I feel like I'm doing the right things.

Angela: Yeah. Because when teachers understand that there is a time and a space on your calendar when you are available and times when you're not, one, they do learn to respect that. Two, when a little like emergency comes up in their mind, and they're oh I need to talk to her right away. When we teach our teachers to be resourceful and wait, it's almost like when you're training a child to raise your hand and be patient for your turn.

Sometimes teachers will just figure out another solution on their own. I would say eight out of 10 times teachers are like oh, let me think of another way. Who else can I go to? They get resourceful, and they figure it out. So you're not left solving everybody's problem because you trust them to figure things out on their own, and you're holding space for them to figure that out.

The other thing I was gonna say is that when you have them pause, and they're being resourceful, you're also trusting yourself. So, for example, if there is something that they can't wait for. Let's say it really is an emergency, and you go and get that thing done. You trust yourself to go back to your schedule and get those things done no matter what. So if

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something does take you off track, you still trust that you're gonna get the thing done that was on the calendar, right? Yeah.

Rebecca: Absolutely. My teachers, there have been times when I haven't gotten to them earlier in the day, and I'll go back to them later and be so what about this? They're oh, I already got it, or I figured it out. So it wasn't as critical as they first thought it was because they could figure it out without me.

Angela: Yeah. Well, a lot of times when we see a problem, our first instinct is to like you want to tell the principal. Everybody wants to report there's a problem, or they just panic. They're in fight or flight in that moment. They have that initial reaction and they panic until they can calm their brain down long enough to think okay, what's the next step I can take? What's a different step I can take to get this solved, which is so good.

Oh, my gosh. Okay. I want to switch gears a little bit because one of the things that Rebecca and I worked on over the summer because she hired me in the summer was creating balance in her life and not overworking. I know she's in the Facebook group and really an active member of the Facebook group.

We did a Summer of Fun challenge. Rebecca was one of the rock stars there, living up her life, going on trips, hiking, exercising. She was like out living life. Can you speak to that Rebecca? Because I feel like so many principals feel sucked in, and they're like holding their breath from Monday to Friday just to come up for air and get some sleep on the weekend.

So they're not having fun during the week, and then they're working on the weekends or over their breaks. Sometimes even over the summer. How are you able to be so successful at work and not overwork, but not only that you have energy and time to plan in fun into your day.

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Rebecca: So a lot of things have changed. I mean from that time when you said it's summer of fun. As you're building that schedule, make sure that you put your own personal fun and personal events in there. That was kind of write myself a permission slip to put your fun in there. Do what you have. I had a few trips and some things on the calendar. So I block those in.

Then I started looking at other things. In the past, it would have been a whole lot of planning for the next school year and spending a lot more time working. I still say if it's time I'm choosing to spend on it, that's great. It's not imposed. But at the same time, I was spending a lot of time doing that. So now really striking a balance and saying okay, I'm putting these things on deck for myself. During those times, I'm not doing schoolwork.

So when I went on my trips, I might have taken a book that I read on the airplane, but I wasn't sitting around each night planning things for school or looking ahead at the school year calendar. I was really taking that as a respite. Then when I would come back home, there'd be a few things I'd want to work on. But I would come back to those things with renewed energy and not feel burdened by it. Where before, I felt like I was going on vacation, but it was kind of taking work on vacation with me. So I never really disconnected from it. So that was super helpful.

Even throughout the school year like I was really inspired by your commitment to exercise when you're talking about I'm going to do this. This is a new habit. I started that probably gosh, I don't even know how many months ago, but I haven't missed a day. Like I have a little program that I do. Every day when I get up, I do it. If for some reason I don't do it first thing in the morning, it makes me crazy at night. I have to do it before I go to bed. I will not let myself do it without having that done in the day. So that's been pretty awesome.

Then I've been able to add some other things in, but just making that time to walk away and be no, I'm going to do this. I went to a photography class

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for four weeks with a friend these last couple of weekends. I'm doing a nature workshop tomorrow. Just taking that time and realizing too like I was working oftentimes staying here till eight or nine o'clock at night just working to fatigue and not really accomplishing anything, not have anything to show for it.

Now I feel like each day there's a few tasks that I want to do before I leave. I kind of feel like I get into that flow. I crank it out. It's done. I don't have to worry about it. There's been days off that I took a day off for a personal day. Which we get three a year. For years, I never ever used the personal leave. Like I just let it accrue. It would roll over into sick leave. These last couple of years I've been no I get three personal days just like everybody else. If there's something that comes up that I want to do, I'm gonna do it.

So I've taken them. I took one off recently for my birthday weekend. We had a snow day the Friday before. I was taking off the Monday. I came in, and I cranked out a bunch of stuff, and got in flow with it. Then when I left, I was done. I am not even messing with it until I get back from my trip on Monday afternoon. So I mean it was one extra day, but it was such a wonderful refreshing respite from being in that flow.

It's nice because I've just been able to give myself permission to take that break. Where before I was no, this is your job. This is your life. You've got to do all this. I'm realizing no, I can do both. I can have my profession, and I can have my life. I'm allowed to kind of strike that balance.

So I mean since that coaching time, it's just been amazing just the change in that. When I go home, sometimes I do take a couple of things with me. Other times I'm like I did everything I could do today, the rest of it will be there tomorrow, and I don't feel bad about it. Where before I'd feel so guilty for anything I would leave at school. It's just been life changing in terms of this year. Just the enjoyment I have of doing my job and then going home

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and being able to just kind of leave it for the night. It's really been wonderful.

Angela: Oh, I love it. I want people to understand that she's not going out and having fun in lieu of working. Like yeah, she's not blowing off or not getting less done because she's out having fun. She's actually more energized and restful and fulfilled because she's having fun, which makes the job more fun.

Because I know for me if I had something to look forward to during the week, I just felt better at work knowing I had some fun things planned in addition to work, right? That work wasn't my only source of accomplishment and success and fulfillment. I could go do other things. Like you said, like take classes or meet up with friends.

Just whatever brings you joy. Literally doing that actually adds value to you as the school leader. Everything still gets done. It's remarkable, but it actually does. You go have fun, you come back happier, and everything still works out beautifully at work. It's so great.

Rebecca: Yes. It has really been just a game changer.

Angela: Yeah. So let's talk about it's not all rainbows and daisies, and I don't want you to think that Rebecca is a unicorn and that she doesn't have any challenges or any problems. That her school's perfect. We're not celebrating that or even saying that. So Rebecca, can you tell them what are some challenges that you've faced, and how have you overcome them this year?

Rebecca: There's been some issues that we've coached on related to staffing or things like that. Those have been challenges, but it's been nice to have the opportunity to talk through those with an outside person. I think that's been hugely beneficial.

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A lot of it has been me recognizing too, again, because of what we work with our kids here too. What am I in charge of? Who am I in charge of? What's my role and responsibility in this? What's their role and responsibility in this? So I think becoming more clear on that has helped me to not feel like everything is my responsibility. Like how other people act, or how other people do their jobs, I'm not in charge of them. I can't get in their body and do it for them, or have it go the way I wanted to. That's up to them.

So, that also has alleviated a lot of stress because there are those challenges. I'm not saying it is all sunshine and roses. But I think for me, recognizing my role versus their role has helped to change my perspective on those challenges. Like it's not just all mine. I don't have to take the entire burden and think it's a reflection of me on how every single solitary thing goes. Everybody has a fair share of that.

That's been part of, I think, a good mind shift for me these last couple of months especially. I mean overall, the other challenges of dealing with staff shortages and changes in protocols and things that downtown our Board Office is all of a sudden requiring of principals or needs this or calls an emergency meeting. There's lots of things that pop up.

So it's just about, I think, like you said, not responding in kind of that whack a mole game. Like it's okay, if this is what I have to do, this is what I have to do. Really, so much of it I think has just been that mind shift of I don't have to be frantically in charge of everything. I can just accept my part of the responsibility and go from there.

Angela: That was so beautifully said because a lot of what we spend time doing is working with people. I mean education is the business of people. We're working with people from the time we walk in the door to the time we leave. Even then, we're working through them on the phone or email. So it is a people business.

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I love how you are able to – We coach on this. This is a huge part of this program is talking about our STEAR cycle versus their STEAR cycle, separating those two. What are we in control of? What are we not? I love how you said what is my role? What is their role? Being able to keep that separate.

Just I think reminding ourselves our job is not to go out and fix all the people or change all the people or control all the people. That's not what we're hired to do. It might feel like that sometimes, but if you really look at what we're doing here, we're not here to manipulate people. That's not the goal. Right? The goal is to mentor and coach and guide and inspire them either up or lovingly out. I think that that shift for you has really taken kind of some stress off of how you interact and lead your teachers.

Rebecca: Absolutely. Because before I really felt like everything that happened, positive and negative, was all a reflection of me as the building principal. Realizing that that's not the end all be all. So that really has alleviated so much of that weight off my shoulders and how I can look at things and how I can engage with people. It just feels good. It feels right. It's like a really good foot.

Angela: Yeah, that's the alignment piece that I talk about. When I talk about aligned leadership, it's you feel in integrity and in alignment with your values, with your leadership values, and with the way you desire to approach people and to handle situations. You'll know when you're in alignment because it feels really good. You feel very grounded and centered and calm and confident and assured. It's such a great space to lead from.

Well, as we wrap up, do you have insights, wisdom? What would you tell people who 've been listening to this podcast? I just signed a client the other day. He's like do you know how many times I've pushed that button, and I was entering into sign up and then I didn't. I kept holding back. So

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somebody who's like wanting to and they're on the fence, what would you say? What is your experience? What advice would you give them if they're considering coaching?

Rebecca: I would say I've been there. I was on the fence, if you recall. Like I emailed you back and forth a couple of times. Like yes, no, yes, no. Ultimately, the investment has been worth every penny. I really think about the commitment of time, like knowing that I have a coaching session every week, and that it is a personalized coaching session. That we're going to target things that I need.

You get to know me. You kind of know my leadership style. As I bring things up, we can talk about circumstances within my setting. It's been huge. I knew after listening to your podcast and talking to you that you could help me make improvements and make gains, but to see how quickly and the magnitude of the shift, that, even to me, has been surprising. About wow, we can talk about this, and I can make this one adjustment. This is so much better. Like this really does make a difference.

So I would say if you're on the fence, honestly take the leap of faith. It's amazing. Just that personalized work really does allow you to move ahead and to align to the best that you can be in terms of your job role.

Angela: Yeah, I agree. I designed this program with myself in mind. It was like what would I have wanted as a leader? One of the most important components for me was somebody to talk to in confidence that was outside of my district. Because I did. I did go to my superintendent and to my assistant supes. I went to my district, and I asked for all the help. Like I was not shy about asking for help. I wanted to know. I wanted to learn and grow.

But sometimes, many times, you always have a filter on because they're your bosses, right? So it's not that I didn't want to be fully transparent. It's that I wasn't sure that I should be. Sometimes I wanted to say the truth of

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how I felt just to kind of get it out so I could clear that up. Then be able to come in with a clean mind about how I wanted to make decisions and approach something.

That's why I designed this to be so personalized because it's important for you as the principal who really works in isolation to be able to have a space, an advocate for you and your dreams and your goals, and for you to have a space where it's completely safe for you to say whatever's on your mind and work through your own feelings. That's why this job is all about the mental and emotional demands of this job nobody's talking about. They're just talking about test scores and teacher retention and how to make all of that happen.

But who's the person making that happen? It's you, right? We have to take care of you as the human sitting in the role of school leader. It's just such an honor to work with you and to see the growth and the progress. Like it is phenomenal. We've worked together, I think, I want to say like 28 sessions. So around 28 weeks. What's that? Half a year ago? Maybe six, seven months, and the transformation has just been incredible.

Rebecca: I've really enjoyed it and just feel so much more confident and capable. I love working with our students. I love the connections and things here in the community, but I just feel so much more appreciation for those kinds of things because it feels like everything is just flowing so much better. I'm personally in such a better space because of it.

Angela: So good.

Rebecca: It's been great.

Angela: Yeah. You get to take these tools with you for the rest of your career. That's the most beautiful part of all, I think, right? Like once you understand this, you can keep applying it. Yeah. Awesome. Well, Rebecca,

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thank you so much for sharing your story. Any last words of wisdom that you want to share with our listeners? Because your story is just so inspiring.

Rebecca: Well, just one bite at a time. You get into the coaching, and then just instead looking at everything all at once, just one bite at a time. It can make a huge difference.

Angela: Yeah. I think you're right. I think the message is when you're willing to slow down, it actually does accelerate you. I know people say that as a cliché. But if you look at the opposite, if you look at the rush and the whack a mole approach and what result that creates, you might be getting some things done, but you also have to measure am I getting it done in a way that feels good to me? So we have to look at how we're feeling as an additional measurement to our success.

Because there's hustle and grind and intensity. You can push and push and work really hard. That's not sustainable, number one. Number two, that doesn't feel good, right? It might feel good to an extent when you're being productive and getting things done as long as that plan includes rest and recovery so that you can kind of go through waves of working hard and waves of some lighter days and some rest and just some fun, quite frankly.

Rebecca: Absolutely.

Angela: Oh fun. All right, my friends. There you have it from Rebecca. She's just killing it. I'm telling you, her life's amazing. She's out having a blast. She's having fun connecting with her teachers and her students. She's not overworking. She's completely in a success cycle right now. I just want you to glean all that you can from her. Thank you so much for sharing, Rebecca. I really appreciate it.

Rebecca: Thank you for inviting me.

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Angela: Oh, so fun. All right, everybody. That's a wrap. We will see you all next week. Take good care. Talk to you soon. Bye.

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